

**Massacre movie
panned by viewers**

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**Beauty in
simplicity**

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Closing a chapter



After mourning her family who perished in last year's 8.0-magnitude earthquake in Sichuan, Wang Fang says goodbye to the remains of the Beichuan building that buried her loved ones. With deafening firecrackers and solemn ceremonies, the country marked the one-year anniversary Tuesday of the quake that killed 90,000 people and left 5 million homeless. Relatives, journalists and celebrities crowded the worst-hit towns to lay flowers, report changes and pledge support. Has tragedy changed Chinese society since last year?

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Beijing won't see Yangtze water for 5 more years

By Han Manman

A plan to channel water into Beijing via the South-to-North Water Diversion Project has been postponed five years. The delay puts unprecedented pressure on the capital's water resources, which have seen falling groundwater levels for years, Beijing water authorities said early this week.

The South-to-North Water Diversion Project would divert 1 billion cubic meters of the Yangtze River into Beijing next year, which would somewhat relieve Beijing's water shortage, Cheng Jing, director of the Beijing Water Authority, said.

The reason for the delay is thought to be related to the redis-

tribution of water and relocation of residents along the 1,400-kilometer channel that would link Hubei province with Beijing, Tianjin and neighboring provinces.

The capital has seen nine years of drought, leaving its water reserves in very short supply. Limited water resources impose restraints on new economic development. Cheng said establishing a rigorous water resource management system is the only way to solve the capital's water shortage.

The city will also raise water prices this year. Chen said the government is expected to draw up price hike plans within the next two months.

"The current prices are not sus-

tainable for a city with a scarcity of water," said professor Wang Dangxian, a researcher with the China Institute of Water Resources and Hydropower Research.

"Raising the water price in Beijing is practical," said Wang, who said water costs Beijing residents one-fifth as much as it does residents of the world's other major cities.

Cheng said the government will urge 40 heavy-polluting enterprises with high water and energy consumption to leave Beijing so the city can develop water-conserving high-end industries.

He said Beijing will promote the use of non-conventional water sources. Beijing will reclaim water

from miscellaneous consumption by the municipal government, construction site dust, environmental and industrial fields. The water used for areas such as golf courses, suburb parks, large-scale green lands and irrigation will be replaced by reclaimed water.

According to figures from the Ministry of Water Resources, Beijing's usable water supplies are around 300 cubic meters per capita, a third of the national rate.

The situation prompted the central government to launch the North-South Water Diversion project, an ambitious 500-billion-yuan project aimed at diverting water from the Yangtze River and its tributaries.

Expo highlights 60 years of Chinese tech

By Huang Daohen

The 12th China Beijing International High-Tech Expo will be held next week from May 19 to May 24, the event's organizing committee said.

The expo, with Technological Innovation Leading Development as its theme, will exhibit the substantial results China has achieved in science and technological innovation, especially in independent innovation, in the 60 years since the founding of New China.

New technology will be the center point of the five-day exhibition. With a floor area of 60,000 square meters, the exhibition is broken up into five professional exhibitions, including consumer electronics and information technology and a recycling economy, energy conservation and emission reduction exhibition.

Five forums, including the China Financial Summit Forum and the China Energy Strategy High-Level Forum, will discuss key topics in national economic and technical development. Nobel prizewinners for economics Edward C Prescott and Eric S Maskin will attend the forum to speak on scientific and technological progress, business cycles and the effectiveness of government intervention in the financial crisis.

At present, 18 governments and scientific, technological, economic and trade institutions from 16 countries and regions have confirmed participation, including some from the US, Canada and the UK.

Foreign enterprises including Nokia Electronics, GE and ABB will exhibit a full range of newly developed products. More than 100 domestic enterprises like Lenovo and Changhong will introduce their latest scientific and technological innovations to which they own intellectual property rights.

Over 20 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the central government will attempt to attract investment for projects, economic exchanges and cooperations during the expo.

This year's expo is co-sponsored by several government departments and organizations including the Ministry of Science and Technology, the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Education and the Beijing Municipal Government.

Swine flu patients in quarantine



By Jin Zhu

As of yesterday, the Chinese mainland confirmed two cases of AH1N1 flu.

A 19-year-old student surnamed Lu, who recently returned from Canada, tested positive for the virus in eastern Shandong Province just two days after a 30-year-old man surnamed Bao was found to have brought the virus from the US Monday.

The Ministry of Health said both are quarantined and are recovering without fever. None of their relatives or people who had close contact with them have shown symptoms of the virus.

The World Health Organization said Wednesday that nearly 6,000 people in 33 countries have contracted the AH1N1 virus, which killed 56 people in Mexico, three in the US, and one each in Canada and Costa Rica.

CFP Photo

Blind masseurs get chance at hospital work

By Jin Zhu

New measures to employ more blind therapeutic masseurs and to protect their legal rights were issued by the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, the State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine and the China Disabled Persons' Federation.

Starting from September 1, blind people who have worked at therapeutic masseurs for two years and who have obtained vocational certification can apply to work in a medical institution as a

qualified physician.

According to statistics from the federation, China has 150,000 blind masseurs, 120,000 of whom work in massage parlors and 30,000 of whom work in therapeutic massage.

"Massage work is a main channel for employing the blind. After taking a series of vocational classes, a blind person is fully capable of performing therapeutic massage. This kind of massage is in high demand at many community-level hospitals," said Li Xuemei, director of Employment

Services Center in Beijing Disabled Persons' Federation.

Zhou Daxin, a blind therapeutic masseur who runs a small local clinic, has dreamt of doing therapeutic massage at a hospital as a physician for years.

Zhou appears confident about his massage skill. "Once a client suffered from bone problems was told he would need surgery to replace his knee joint. However, after about 20 sessions of massage, his joint was saved," he said.

"Many of my blind colleagues

have excellent massage skills. However, without any qualifications, field work in the hospital is just a daydream," he said.

According to the current Licensed Physician Law passed in 1998, all qualified physicians must pass a series of exams. However, some of the exams cannot be passed by a blind person, such as the written exam or physical observation test.

"The Disabled Persons' Federation will make arrangements for blind therapeutic masseurs to take their needs into consider-

ation, such as replacing the written exam with an oral version," Zhao Qian, deputy director general from the Federation, said.

After passing the exam, a blind masseur can be certified as passing junior level vocational training.

Still, blind physicians have an insurmountable barrier in observing a patient's complexion, and these blind therapeutic masseurs will have no power to prescribe medicine or carry out other medical treatments, according to the new measures.



Zhang Junbo, 36 (middle) learns to use a computer with his mother (left) at a class held by the local blind association.

Computers offer the blind a colorful future

By Annie Wei

Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 50-year-old blind masseuse Wu Shilan leaves home at 7 am to take Bus 701 with her colleagues to a computer class organized by a local blind association.

Wu and her colleague Li Xinchao, 26, from Henan Province seem no different from the bus's other passengers. They cling to the guard rail by the ticketing booth when no one offers them a seat on the cramped bus.

The two disembark at Zhangzhizhong Lu, where Wu leads Li to walk along Ping'an Avenue instead of in the pedestrian lane.

"There is a path for the blind (on the pedestrian lane), but there are a lot of bumps and other obstacles like trees and electrical poles," Wu said.

Wu lost her sight in older age. She still has limited vision under bright light. Li, who was born blind, holds her shoulders and follows behind her.

Web as seen by the blind

The class is offered on the third floor of the Dongcheng community service center at Kuanjie, across the street from Beijing Chinese Traditional Medicine Hospital.

An elevator – free of any Braille markings – is the only way up.

Besides computer class, the third floor has a policy information center, job postings and other classes for the blind.

People of all ages attend: from fashionable young girls to older men. Some were born blind like Li, while others are losing their sight. Some come to class alone, and others rely on their families to help them.

The course is taught by Xia Yun, 30, from China Braille Publishing House, developer of a voice-control program called Yangguang, or sunshine.

Xia has trained many blind people at many schools, both in and out of Beijing, in her seven years of teaching.

The project to aid blind Chinese computer users dates back to 2002, but rapid development began only three years ago,

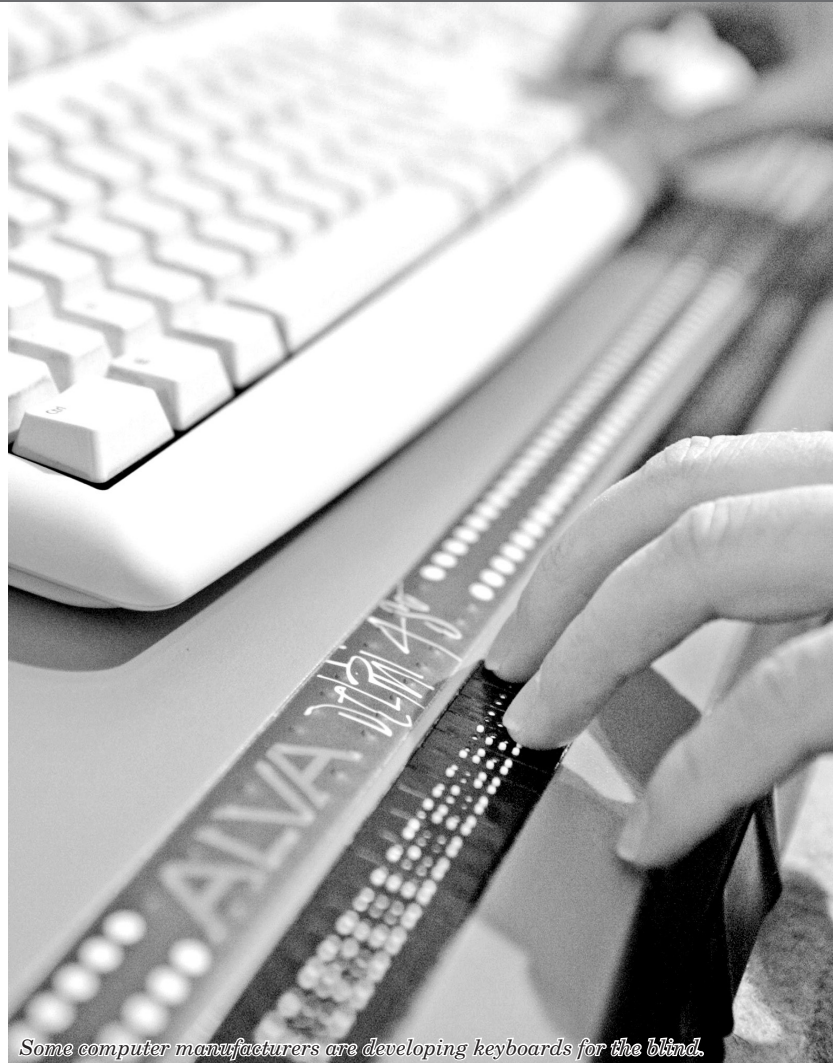
Xia said. The classes are sponsored by China Braille Publishing House, the China Blind Association (CBA) and China Disabled Persons' Federation's employment guide center.

Courses teach basic computing steps on Windows and how to use screen reading software. A blind user has to turn on the computer, then press a key combination like Ctrl+Alt+X to activate the screen reader. After mastering basic shortcuts, surfing online, chatting and reading become easy.

Each class lasts 2.5 hours, during which one or two new procedures are taught. Much class time is taken up by tech support and requests to repeat instructions, often-times into a cell phone.

Xia said in urban settings like Beijing, the blind have more access to information and knowledge; in the countryside, few blind people have even heard of a screen, CPU or keyboard.

"But their learning ability is amazing," Xia said. Eager for information



Some computer manufacturers are developing keyboards for the blind.

More support needed

CFP Photos

Monday's class was emptier than usual. Wu said some students did not come because they heard they might not get the software for free.

When Wu first learned about the class, she heard students who passed its exam would be given a free copy of the voice-control software courtesy of Beijing Massage Association.

The software costs 700 yuan, which many blind users find too costly.

"A blind masseur makes more than 1,000 yuan per month," Wu said, "We can scrape together the money to buy a computer, but 700 yuan (which used to be 1,200 yuan) for the software is too much."

Li Xinchao, Wu's colleague from Henan Province worried about the quality of the computer more than its warranty. Taking a computer in for repairs is especially difficult for blind people, because many roads and buildings are not accessible.

"What if we buy a computer but it won't power on?" Li said. Cell phone makers like Motorola, on the other hand, offer free repairs for the blind at all Motorola outlets.

He Chuan, director of the information accessibility office at China Braille Publishing House is also blind. He started using computers in 1997 with Microsoft DOS, and continues to use Vista today.

He said with software updates and the development of the Internet, blind users

face many new challenges. "Many Web sites and chat tools use security codes (CAPTCHAs). These codes are photos which cannot be interpreted by computers, and thus cannot be read by screen reader software," He Chuan said.

However, such issues can easily be solved if manufacturers apply information-accessibility standards when developing new products, he said.

Li Hongwei, vice president and secretary-general of the CBA, said although the government and related authorities have tried to promote computer use for the blind, accessibility only works when everyone adopts it.

The equal distribution of technology is another problem. While Wu Silan, a Beijinger from Dongcheng District, could register at several community centers to attend various free classes, Li find few opportunities like that in his hometown.

Due to district financial budgets, Li may be excluded from free software programs in Beijing.

China is home to 17 million registered blind people, 75 percent of whom live in the countryside. Although the country has promoted information technology since 2002, only 20,000 blind people have access to computers. In Taiwan or Hong Kong, about 13 percent of blind people have access to computers.

The association's eleventh five-year plan calls for putting computers in the hands of 50,000 blind people.

Eager for information

Besides working as a blind masseuse, Wu Shilan is also manager of Shilan Anmo on the first floor of a residential compound on Nongzhan Nan Lu.

At Chaoyang Park's west gate and Zaoyingli area near Wu's workplace, the massage market is very competitive. Zaoyangli was one of the most affluent neighborhoods of the early 1990s, and was home to many foreign or joint-venture companies and South Korean and Japanese businessmen.

There seems to be a massage parlor every 10 to 15 meters, but Wu's plain parlor is booming. Customers can be very demanding, calling near midnight and making Wu work until 1 am.

When there are no customers, Wu turns on her mobile phone to replay last week's class, using the computer keyboard without the computer borrowed from friend's, to memorize and practice.

Wu said she was envious of her other friends who were good with computers, and she has wanted to learn to use one for a long time. However, she never had the time for it before last year, when she started to learn Chinese Braille and pinyin.

"I thought I could do more if I learned how to use a computer, like surfing online, listening to the news and reading," Wu said.

In China, knowing Braille is not ter-

ribly useful. While there are some Braille books, they are expensive, and are produced in extremely limited quantities. What's more, the books are hardly portable: The complete set of *A Dream of Red Mansions* is 50 centimeters tall. Dictionaries are also of limited use, and it may take a blind reader the whole night just to look up several words when learning English.

Wu talked about her friend Cao Jun, a 31-year-old blind Beijing man, known for using computers to run his eight massage parlors, and for selling phones and cell phones to other blind people all over China.

Cao's success was widely reported: from his struggle to become a masseur, to learning computers and to managing his own network of parlors using Tencent's QQ messaging software. Today he teaches computers to other blind people.

Li Hongwei, vice president and secretary-general of the CBA, said most people get 70 percent of their information from what they see. But new computer developments and accessible information are helping blind people to close that gap.

In the past, massage was the only skill taught to the blind, but "a blind person with a computer can be a professional programmer, run an e-business or create music," Li said.

Tianjin's mysterious weight loss hospital aims to go abroad

By Zhao Hongyi

Cui Tiantai from Gansu Province complained bitterly to his online friends that three weeks at Tianjin Aimin Weight-Losing Hospital had damaged his body. The 125-kilogram man said he developed anorexia and was losing fat slower than expected.

But Alonzo Bland, another patient, has become something of a superstar at the hospital the last two months. The 284.5-kilogram young American shed his way down to 150 kilograms through the hospital's regimen of traditional Chinese herbal medicines. He is determined to continue its "ghost training," losing 25 kilograms each month until he weighs 90 kilograms.

Loving people

Tianjin Aimin (loving people) Weight-Losing Hospital seems wrapped in mystery. The five-floor hospital is cut off from the surrounding city by high walls. Since it opened in 1999, the hospital has made a name for itself by slimming down the world's portliest people.

The hospital is privately owned and has expanded into a dozen Chinese cities like Wuhan, Guangzhou and Guilin, and abroad to Japan, South Korea and Singapore.

"We've helped thousands of overweight people lose weight with custom-tailored programs," Su Zhixin, Bland's doctor, said. "Several hundred of the hospital's guests are foreigners."

"Proper weight is the square of your height (in meters) times 18.5 to 24," Shi Lidong, founder and president of the hospital, said. "Stray from that range and you'll be either too fat or too thin."

Newcomers are given a full workup through a battery of Western medicine tests to gauge their overall health. The hospital uses this measurement as a base to monitor a patient's progress and health during the program.

Mouhamed Jihad from Qatar went from 132.4 kilograms to 113 during his two-month stay, while Hong Kei-jing from Malaysia shed his way down to 116.8 kilograms from 132.6 in 34 days.

Last July, the hospital received two brothers from Iowa, 180.4-kilogram Wait Anderson, 55, and 151.2-kilogram David Anderson, 50. The two brothers lost more than 50 kilograms each in two months and returned to the US later in the year.

One of the most famous patients was Kato Dai from Japan, who went from 272 to 156 kilograms in three months.

Negative impact

Many patients describe the 8,000-yuan process as "ghost training." But some worry about the side effects of such rapid weight loss.



People at Aimin have exhausting physical training every day to lose weight.



The hospital is not averse to surgery, especially for excess skin.

Photos provided by Aimin Hospital



Aimin Hospital has an international reputation.

Photo by Zhao Hongyi

Far from starvation, the patients lose weight through a combination of Chinese herbal medicine, acupuncture, massage, diet, tons of aerobic exercise, swimming, running and psychological counseling to help break bad habits, Su said.

These are controlled within what patients consider a tolera-

ble limit, "otherwise, they could never bear it," Su said.

But a number of patients find life at the hospital too hard. Many found they developed new diseases after a few months of "ghost training": diabetes mellitus, fatty liver and hormonal imbalance were the most common.

Li Jianfeng, who was the

doctor for Jihad and Hong, did not deny that the program was tough on its patients, and could lead to internal problems, fatigue and anorexia.

"These symptoms occur only in the beginning," Li said. "We have specialists who arrange training, medical treatment and food to make sure patients recover while staying in the hospital."

Li blames the unwillingness of some to bear the exercise requirements. "The process ensures patients maintain a healthy life and all physical functions," Li said. "After they leave, that's when they can enjoy the results of the hard work."

Yang Changming, a doctor and professor from the University of Chinese Medication and Medicines, agreed that the beginning is the most difficult. "The main challenge is combining all these treatments safely," he said.

"I find it quite nice here. I only came for the acupuncture and didn't need to change my appetite. My weight never rebounded," Jihad said.

Going abroad

Though the hospital is a success, its President Shi is not without headaches.

"We want to go overseas, but there are complicated laws and rules in the US and Europe," Shi said.

While some countries opt not to regulate herbs sold as herbal supplements, actual medical practice is something else. Xu Jinti, a professor of Chinese medicine at Nottingham University, said a 40-year effort has resulted in the

opening of 3,000 Chinese medical clinics throughout the UK.

But that does not help Aimin Hospital, which wants to go beyond a simple clinic.

"The British government is not yet ready to accept and recognize Chinese herbal medicine," Mei Wanfang, chairman of the Chinese Medicine Council, UK, said.

Doctor Su Zhixin of Aimin Hospital said the situation is the same in Canada and the US. But things may be looking up thanks to an unlikely ally: the flu.

The Center for Disease Control in the US signed an agreement with the Guangzhou Baiyun Herbal Medicine, a major herbal medicine producer, to refine Banlangen, an anti-flu medicine, to fight against bird and swine flu.

Traditional medicine has not vanished in China's economic boom. Instead, the most affluent are pursuing traditional medicine for cures, beautification and weight loss. Some even turn to traditional medicine to fight or manage cancer, liver disease and kidney disease.

This month, the central government filed an appeal to include traditional medicine in the new basic health coverage for all citizens. It hopes to persuade all sides to accept it as a major medical product.

"We'll focus on spreading throughout China first," Gao Haibo, director-general of the hospital, said. "It takes more time and effort to go abroad."

"But we'll continue our march abroad when the time is right. It has to happen sooner or later!" Gao said.

One year after a magnitude-8 earthquake devastated parts of Sichuan Province, the country paused Tuesday to remember the nearly 90,000 people left dead or missing by the disaster.



A year later, China rises from quake ruins

(USA Today) – With deafening firecrackers and solemn ceremonies, the country marked the one-year anniversary Tuesday of the massive earthquake that killed up to 90,000 people and left 5 million homeless.

Bereaved relatives crowded the worst-hit towns in Sichuan Province to lay flowers, light incense and burn imitation money.

In Yingxiu, close to the epicenter of the quake, President Hu Jintao pledged support for rebuilding projects and disaster prevention toward a “more harmonious relationship between man and nature.”

“We have stood up!” says the headline in the *Chengdu Commercial News*, a newspaper in the provincial capital.

Celebrities, such as kung fu actor Jackie Chan and hurdler

Liu Xiang, joined the memorials by meeting with students who survived the country's worst natural disaster in decades. Chan is headlining a team of 300 stars performing pop concerts at several locations.

Former residents of Beichuan, the hardest-hit city that lost about half of its population of 20,000 to the quake, were granted access to the sealed ruins to mourn their dead.

Zhu Yuanming, a carpenter, returned to light incense for his sister and his identical twin.

“I don't blame the building quality. I agree with the government that this quake was simply too strong,” he says. “The government has made huge efforts at reconstruction. We have to face reality, and hope that our lives will pick up again.”

At the scene

Survivors band together

In Tianfu Square in central Chengdu, more than 1,000 people gathered to remember the exact time the earthquake hit – 2:28 pm on May 12, 2008. Peng Chuan, hoisting up his girlfriend to take pictures of the scene, said they plan to marry soon.

“The disaster made me cherish even more the people who love me,” he says. “I don't care about money like I did in the past. I want to enjoy and cherish my life.”

Huang Li, 37, a physician who lost three limbs crushed in the earthquake, leaving just her right arm, joined a public commemoration in Chengdu. She spent 97 hours pinned beneath the bed in her fourth-floor apartment

in Dujiangyan without food or water, but one thought kept her alive: “My son is my hope so I can survive in the darkness,” she said of her 10-year-old child.

A volunteer eventually dug a tunnel and dragged her out of the rubble. “I felt hopeless at first, with no confidence,” Huang said about the months spent recovering in a Guangzhou hospital. “But I met similar patients and we encouraged each other, so I decided to form an organization to help more people like me.”

Late last year, Huang established Heart Starting Point, a non-governmental organization that also runs a Web site and hotline at the Sichuan Provincial People's Hospital.

Sidelights

Canada-aided wood-framed primary school opens

The Xiang'e Primary School, the first school with wood-framed buildings in quake-hit Sichuan, will enroll about 540 students in September, officials said Tuesday.

The wood and building technologies for constructing the school were donated by Canada. Construction is scheduled to be completed

in June in Dujiangyan City, one of the areas worst hit by the quake.

Jerry Dickson, an expert in charge of the school project, said wood-framed buildings can withstand strong earthquakes and building them consumes less energy and time compared to concrete housing structures.

US diplomats join mourning

US diplomatic missions in China on Tuesday joined in mourning those who died in the Sichuan earthquake last year.

At the US Embassy in Beijing, more than 200 Chinese and US staff, led by Don Washington, acting deputy chief of mission,

attended a 20-minute ceremony Tuesday afternoon.

In the US consulate-general in Chengdu, the US flag was lowered at 6 am, a staff member said.

US consulates-general in Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenyang also held brief ceremonies. (Agencies)



Thousands of former residents flock a year later to Beichuan to remember loved ones who perished in the quake.

CFP Photos

Third eye

Has tragedy changed society?

Amid the country's greatest natural disaster in a generation, signs of hope emerged that the tragedy might change society.

But a year after the quake left nearly 90,000 people dead or missing, that initial promise of a more open and volunteer-minded China has faded.

The country's openness in days after the quake – toward both foreign and domestic journalists, and toward international aid workers and homegrown volunteers – earned it mountains of goodwill from the world.

A year later, the earthquake zone has returned to what most expected from the start: areas blocked for alleged safety concerns, domestic press reverting to mostly happy recitations about the optimism of survivors and local governments reining in independent volunteer groups.

Bloggers complain about incessantly good news coming from domestic media about the quake zone.

“Please do not tell me how beautiful the disaster area is right now,” wrote one blogger after returning from Sichuan this spring. “This is the time to remember, but not to sing our achievements. Instead of all this ridiculous praise, I would rather see you do something simple like use the space in your newspaper to publish the names of all the dead students.”

Yet this seemed like a new chapter for China, particularly in contrast to the Tangshan earthquake that killed at least 240,000 people 32 years earlier. It was then a country still closed off from the world and refused all offers of international aid.

On Monday, Xinhua reported that Sichuan Province had received about US \$2.3 billion (15.7 billion yuan) in donations for earthquake relief thus far. It is not clear how much came from within the country.

The droves of volunteers have dropped off. A volunteer in Sichuan in November, a Beijing hairdresser, said he first went to help out along with a doctor, a lawyer and half a dozen others. Just six months after the disaster, he said with a shrug: “It's just me coming back now. Everyone else is too busy.”

Of course, some believe the national spirit of giving continues. Zhang Guoyuan, who started his own aid center in Chengdu after the quake, said the number of volunteers has tapered off, but the movement remains.

“People's desire to help is still strong, but we have had to create more professional organizations,” he said.

– Kathleen McLaughlin, *GlobalPost*

Foreign companies 'can be listed in China'

Companies from the UK and other foreign countries will be able to have their shares traded on Chinese stock markets, Beijing said.

The position was confirmed after talks on Sino-UK economic cooperation led by vice premier Wang Qishan and UK chancellor Alistair Darling.

If it happens, foreign companies would have access to the large and growing funds of Chinese savers.

No timetable was specified for the change in the rules.

Bold and ambitious

Opening up the Shanghai market to foreign companies is

still an aspiration.

But the role of Vice Premier Wang in the discussions puts a degree of political commitment behind it that will give it extra momentum.

When it happens, it could be another major step in the country's growing integration into the international financial system.

Jim O'Neill of the international investment bank Goldman Sachs said it was a "very bold and ambitious step," but that the devil would be in the detail.

Foreign companies will only take the opportunity to list in China if it is easy and credible

for them to do it, he said.

If it did happen, he said, services companies like construction firms and retailers, such as Wal-Mart, might well be interested.

The bank HSBC was also an obvious candidate, he said.

Vital role

The financial crisis loomed large in discussions between UK and Chinese officials, with Britain deep in recession and China experiencing a sharp slowdown in economic growth.

The global downturn has reinforced China's rising economic profile as a key player that needs to be involved in

tackling international problems, something Darling acknowledged after the meeting.

Given it was expected to continue growing, Darling said China's role "as a motor of global recovery" was "absolutely vital," comments which reflect China's importance in terms of the trade in goods and services.

Allowing foreign companies to list their shares on its stock exchange would underpin its rising status in global finance too.

It would also be an important step towards the Chinese authorities' ambition to make Shanghai a major global financial center.

(Agencies)

Microsoft plans to sell Windows 7 with 'XP mode'

By Han Manman

Microsoft admitted its Vista operating system sold less in China than expected since the OS launched three years ago.

The Redmond giant is preparing for the release of its next Windows operating system, Windows 7, which in some ways may be the successor to XP that Vista was not.

During an event last weekend in Beijing, Mike Nash, vice president of Windows product management at Microsoft, said the company learned a lesson from Vista in China and has made many changes to its product.

Chinese customers detailed numerous, serious technical problems with Vista in both computing and consumer Web sites.

"The main problem is how Vista hogs processing power, leaving many users twiddling their thumbs while they wait for their computer to do something," Wang Chong, a customer, said.

Another problem was incompatibility of many applications. Companies were looking at a second round of spending to update their incompatible software: Faced with those costs, most users stuck with Windows XP.

The new Windows 7 will include a true "revert to Windows XP" mode to encourage business users to begin the upgrade. The XP mode uses Windows Virtual PC technology to make the operating system compatible to run applications designed for XP. This will allow users to load XP applications on an XP system, then use them in Windows 7.

With Windows 7, Microsoft is also making some subtle changes to the ways it tries to thwart piracy.

As has been the case for some time, Microsoft's strategy hinges on requiring a user to electronically verify their software, a process known as Activation. The software also checks periodically to see whether the installed Windows is genuine.

Microsoft said in December 2007 that Windows Vista was pirated at half the rate of Windows XP. Alex Kochis, director of product management for Microsoft, said he expects that general trend will continue in Windows 7.

GM plans China-made vehicles for US market

General Motors plans to export vehicles made at its joint ventures in China to the US in the coming years, the official Shanghai Securities News reported Wednesday.

GM aims to ship about 50,000 China-made vehicles to the US annually in 2014, the report said, without identifying the source of the information.

The move will make GM's two China vehicle manufacturing ventures the first among Chinese producers to export passenger cars to the US, the newspaper added.

GM has a car venture in Shanghai with SAIC Motor, and it also produces mini vans and pick-up trucks in south China through SAIC-GM-Wuling.

A GM China spokeswoman declined comment. (Agencies)

Krugman says chances of yuan becoming Int'l currency slim

Nobel laureate Paul Krugman criticized China's economic policy at a lecture in Beijing on Monday, offering a negative outlook for the Chinese currency becoming an international currency in his lifetime and saying that he cannot understand why China spends so much of its trade surplus buying unprofitable US national bonds.

Citing the example of the euro, Krugman said while it became the common currency in Europe after long years of negotiation and planning, it still cannot compare with the US dollar. Likewise, he said, it will take many years for the Chinese yuan to become internationally viable, and this will be difficult to achieve in his lifetime.

Krugman argued that Chi-

na's huge trade surplus is a result of government policies and the deficit would not run this high if regulatory intervention on yuan exchange rates was to be reduced. China should make an effort to reduce its trade surplus as the world is not likely to continuously accept such tremendous trade deficits, he said.

Referring to whether China manipulates its exchange rate, Krugman said that China's huge trade surplus is the result of the Chinese government's manipulation of its exchange rate. Krugman said that China set a fixed exchange rate for its currency, and keeps its currency valuation relatively weak by purchasing a great amount of foreign currency.

In response, Long Yongtu,

secretary general of the Boao Forum for Asia, said China should not be blamed for its large trade surplus, and that the country does not manipulate its exchange rate as Krugman suggested.

"China's current approach of restricting currency convertibility is actually a consequence of the US-dominated financial order, rather than the result of the Chinese government's manipulation," Long said.

"Because of the unfairness of the current global financial order, we have restricted currency convertibility. Should any country that does not choose to implement free currency convertibility be regarded as manipulating its exchange rate?"

(Agencies)

Firms allowed to issue consumer finance loans

By Huang Daohen

The banking regulator announced Tuesday it plans to allow local and foreign financial institutions to set up firms offering easier and faster individual consumer loans.

The move is part of the government's latest measures to boost domestic consumption and support economic growth. Previously, the only ways to get consumer loans in China were from banks and automobile financing companies, Xinhua reported.

Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin and Chengdu will be the first group to establish consumer finance companies on a trial basis, according to the draft rule released by the China Banking Regulatory Commission (CBRC), the nation's bank-

ing watchdog.

Under the new rules, the proposed companies can provide personal loans for durable goods, including home appliances and electronic products, as well as ordinary expenditures for education, tourism, weddings and home renovation.

However, the interest rate of loans is probably a little bit higher than that of commercial banks'.

The companies would not be allowed to accept deposits and would have to maintain a minimum registered capital of 300 million yuan. Prospective applicants should have at least 80 billion yuan in total assets, five years of experience in consumer financing and profitability in the last two fiscal years, according to the draft rules.



Paul Krugman

IC Photo

Cleaner faces life sentence for keeping lost gold

By Han Manman

An airport cleaner in Shenzhen could face life in prison after she was accused of stealing a bag containing 3 million yuan in gold jewelry.

Prosecutors in the city's Bao'an District plan to try Liang Li, 40, for stealing 14 kilograms of gold jewelry from an unclaimed piece of luggage last December, the *Guangzhou Daily* reported Monday. They said conviction could carry a maximum life sentence.

Liang was working in the departure hall of Shenzhen International Airport's Terminal B last December 9 when she found a cardboard box on an unattended trolley near a trash can.

Liang told the police she thought the box had been discarded. She admitted showing it to her co-workers, surnamed Cao and Ma, who opened the box and each took some of the jewelry they found inside. Liang said she took the rest home.

Liang said that when she saw the jewelry, her first reaction was that they were fake because no one would leave behind such valuables.

Shenzhen city prosecutors did not consider the incident a theft and forwarded the case to Bao'an district prosecutors. The latter regarded Liang's actions as theft and sent the case back to the local police for further investigation.

Lawyers say that if Liang is found guilty of theft, she could face a life sentence. A lesser crime of illegal possession carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison.

The media and the public have compared Liang's case to that of Xu Ting, a migrant worker in Guangzhou who was sentenced to life after he was convicted of theft for withdrawing 175,000 yuan from a malfunctioning ATM machine in 2007. He appealed the verdict and his prison sentence was reduced to five years.



The spot in Shenzhen Airport where Liang "stole" the jewelry.

Photo provided by Nanfang Daily

Comment

She is guilty of theft

Liang is obviously guilty of theft. She is guilty because she took the box home instead of handing it over to airport officials after discovering what was inside and realizing the possibility that the find was worth a huge sum.

— Pu Weisong, a lawyer from Guangdong Jiahui Law Firm

Not theft but illegal possession

Liang's is a typical case in China. The key is what she is being charged with. I think it's not appropriate to charge Liang with theft because she neither secretly stole nor had a motive of unlawfully taking the box. She might be guilty of illegal possession since she did take it home.

— Wu Xuebin, a law professor at Shenzhen University

Need to fill in legal blanks

As in Xu Ting's case, there are no laws that directly address the case; the decision is up to the judge. But this can swing both ways and affect the outcome of Liang's whole life.

Public support may help Liang get a relatively fair trial, but what about other people facing a similar case but who are unknown to the public? What we need is to fill in missing rules and improve

related laws. By doing this, Liang's case could achieve its biggest value.

— Li Ji, a reporter

We can all make the same mistake

I understand Liang. What she did could happen to anyone. Are you sure that if you were Liang, you would definitely take the box to the police? Many of us always want to get things cheap; that's human nature. This case should serve as a lesson for Liang and us, but it should not be considered a crime.

— Wang Chen, a netizen
Public should not be involved in the judgment
Xu Ting's case eventually became a game between netizens and the court. In the end, it was viewed as the public's victory rather than a judicial victory. Because of strong public support, he only got five years in jail.

Now, we can see that netizens are again ready for another round with the judges. But this time around, we should not get tangled up in the decision; leave the judging to judges. We cannot try to change the verdict every time a controversial case comes up. Justice should be based on the law, not the public's appeal.

All we need to do now is to wait for the results and not put pressure on the judge.

— Ma Xiangbin, a critic

Debate of the week

Female-only carriages in subway denied

By Chen Zao

Wang Zhuo, a member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), recently proposed that the municipal government "allot female-only carriages in subways." Beijing's subway authorities refused to consider Wang's proposal, and it looks like the idea will go down the drain.

Wang said the current setup in Beijing's subways was

not sensible. Most women complain of difficulty getting on carriages during rush hours, especially in Line 1's Fuxingmen and Jianguomen stations.

Improving existing services should be easier than setting up new infrastructure systems, Wang said. "My original idea for proposing female-only carriages was to encourage the subway department to improve

its services, pay more attention to disadvantaged groups and put more effort into making their services more humane," he said.

The subway authority said it is not the right time to provide female-only carriages. It said it will first focus on solving problems regarding traffic capacity and traffic quantity, and meeting the needs of passengers.

Glasses of 'running teacher' exhibited by museum

By Wang Yu

The Wenchuan Earthquake Museum, built to commemorate last year's magnitude-8 tremor that killed almost 90,000, opened Monday. Among the objects that attracted huge attention within the building and online was an ordinary pair of glasses.

The spectacles belonged to Fan Meizhong, a former high school teacher in Dujiangyan City who ran for his life the moment the quake struck, abandoning his students in the classroom. He then defended

his action on the Internet, which ended up making him a controversial figure nationwide and earned him the moniker "Running Fan."

The museum bought the glasses from Fan for 234 yuan. Beside it were his students' textbooks and an invoice for the glasses.

Wu Zhiwei, director of the museum's planning department, said Fan had no objections to having his glasses displayed. "He gained national attention and was a headline-grabber who should be part

of the museum's records," Wu said. The director said the museum was taking a neutral position on the issue of Fan's behavior, but that a public discussion of the teacher's actions showed progress in society.

Some people think the museum put Fan under the spotlight again, so that society will have figures to blame for some of the casualties. However, Fan still insists he just did what he thought was right at that time, and that no one has the right to judge him or cast him as a villain.

Couple lives out American Dream in China

By Venus Lee

Husband and wife Mike and Deena Van't Hul gave up their affluent life in the US in 2005 to do charity work in China. They were ready to live out the American Dream in a foreign land.

In the past four years, they have taken under their wing 40 severely handicapped children in Fuzhou City, Fujian Province. They named their new home "Hidden Treasures Home."



The Van't Huls pose with their foster children and staff members.

Cradle for handicapped children

Caleb was their first foster child. He has brain paralysis, a cleft lip and palate, severe heart disease and gray matter heterotopias, a neurological disorder. It was even difficult to distinguish whether he was a boy or a girl when they first met him, Deena said. A doctor said Caleb would not live beyond two years, but he just celebrated his fourth birthday several days ago.

"He can't speak or sit up by himself. He can't eat solid foods, only drink milk. But we're thankful for his progress and growing strength," Deena, 38, said.

Five-year-old Wang Peng is another miracle. He was rescued by police from human traffickers in 2006, but became paralyzed because of brain damage from oxygen loss after being shut inside a box too long. The Van't Huls asked to take the boy home from the Fuzhou Welfare Center for Children (FWCC) after they heard his story. Although Wang can no longer move, the fact he is alive is a wonder.

Hidden Treasures has been home to other big and small joys. Its 25 current residents, ranging from infants to adolescents, are happy and energetic. Some have been adopted by families overseas. "Almost all children here were abandoned by their families because of their severe handicap," Deena said.

Aside from the Van't Huls, the children are being cared for by 16 Chinese nurses and four foreign volunteer teachers. "Bilingual education can help these children adapt to a new family, no matter whether they are adopted by a Chinese or an English-speaking family," Deena said.

Zhang Ping, vice president of FWCC, said the American couple choose to take in the most severely disabled children. "When they apply for new foster children at FWCC, we usually introduce them to those who are mildly disabled, but they insist that love first be showered on those who are in most need," Zhang said.

Deena said she and Mike, 40, see these children as hidden gems. "They are rare treasures. Hidden behind deformities, disabilities and social prejudices are beauty, grace and love if you can reach deep into their hearts," she said. "It is our desire that every child who comes here experiences the love of a mother and a father."



Each child has a bed and his or her own toys.



The Van't Huls spending time with some of their foster children

Photos provided by Lin Fuda

Giving with open hands

Back in Florida, Mike was a banker and Deena was a speech pathologist. They married in 1993 and have two sons, Logan, 12, and Mitchell, 9, who also live in Fuzhou with them. Soon after their wedding, their common love for volunteering took them to Brazil and Africa. They thought that if their own children were more important than others, then what was the real value of life?

"We found the answer after thinking long and hard: Other kids are as important as ours, and the value of life lies in giving infinite love to those who are in need," Deena said.

Their bond with China was formed in July 2004, when they adopted a baby girl from Hunan Province. "Pacifica is so adorable. We love her very much, and so Mike and I began to think whether we can help more children. But we can't take all the children back to America. We then decided to move to China to help them," Deena said.

The Van't Huls sold their house, gave away their two cars and moved to Fuzhou in September 2005. "It was really difficult to leave Florida because we have a very close-knit family," Deena said. "Fortunately Mike's

parents and my parents are very supportive of our decision. They are very proud of us."

The couple first began doing volunteer work at FWCC. When they saw how severely handicapped children needed a lot more special care and love, they applied for a permit to care for these children in their home, said FWCC director Chen Xin. They bought an old kindergarten building and turned it into what is now Hidden Treasures Home.

According to FWCC, the center pays for a foster child's basic expenses like medical treatment, education and therapy fees. In addition, foster families can receive between 600 and 1,000 yuan in subsidies per month. But the Van't Huls refused any money from FWCC.

"A smile or an utterance of 'papa' and 'mama' from the sickest baby is worth more than any paycheck we've ever received. We're not worried about money. We can afford the cost of running the home," Deena said. "The money we got from selling our house and donations from the US are enough." She said Mike has a part-time job as a consultant, which helps make ends meet.

Hoping for more care for handicapped orphans

Deena hopes more people will open their arms to handicapped orphans. There are many couples standing in line to adopt, but few want handicapped children because of the obvious difficulties.

"Most children in welfare centers have no foreign language or special skills. They'll have trouble competing in society. Their employment and independence as adults will become a burden to their adoptive families, so not many are interested in them," Zhang of FWCC said.

Because foster homes are temporary, foster children develop deeper psychological wounds after years of jumping from family to family. "The child will consider the foster family as his or her own after living with them for some time. Once the child is returned to the welfare center, he or she develops extreme anxiety about being wanted, which is very harmful psychologically," Zhang said. "So the government advocates adoption by qualified families."

A supplement to welfare centers

Zhang considers Hidden Treasures a "very good supplement to welfare centers for children." They relieve some of the pressure on welfare center's resources. He said institutions like the FWCC cannot completely depend on government assistance, so creative solutions need to be found for the children's sake.

Raising orphans is still the main task of welfare centers for children in the country, Zhang said, but the setting cannot ensure that each child reaches his or her full potential. Despite their shortcomings, foster homes are still a better choice.

"Compared with children raised in welfare centers, foster children usually have a brighter and more cheerful disposition. They are very curious about their surroundings, because they have more opportunities to interact with others and form social relations," he said.

The Van't Huls are indeed making a difference in lives of a child at a time.



Caleb with his foster parents

Unicef releases aid report on Sichuan quake anniversary

By Huang Daohen

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) released a report Monday on the aid it provided over the past year to earthquake-devastated areas in Sichuan Province.

The report, released on the quake's first anniversary, details UNICEF's work with the Chinese government to help rebuild areas hit by the magnitude-8 tremor last May.

Affected localities received material aid worth US \$20 million (136.5 million yuan) geared toward education, sanitation, nutrition, clean water and social policies for children, the report says.

"The scale of the Sichuan earthquake was large and the Chinese government has made tremendous progress in providing shelter for families," Yin Yin Nwe, UNICEF Representative for China, said, "But there are still many families that need help to resume their normal life."

Nwe said UNICEF will continue to support the government's efforts in disaster relief and meeting the demands of children and women. She said the UN body will continue pro-

viding aid to the quake-hit sites until 2011.

Apart from financial aid, Nwe said UNICEF also rallied celebrities to promote the cause. Last month, three top stars, who are also part of the Hong Kong Committee for UNICEF ambassadors, visited Sichuan.

The ambassadors, Charlie Young, Miriam Young and Louis Koo Tin-Lok, visited projects aimed at helping children recover from the disaster. They also learned about emergency relief work on child protection, water and sanitation.

"They look to be in high spirits," said Miriam Young, an actress and singer best known for her performance in the 1994 feature film *Butterfly Lovers*. "Compared to the destruction of their homes, the earthquake's psychological impact on these children could be deeper and longer-lasting," she said. "The children need material relief, but we also need to help them recover their belief in life."

UNICEF has received donations totaling US \$37 million, and it is aiming to reach US \$45 million to fund its middle and long-term aid programs in Sichuan, the report says.

Holland brings Bike Day to China

By He Jianwei

Bicycle lovers get their own festival courtesy of the Dutch embassy on May 24, during which there will be bike races and bicycle-assembly contests.

"Holland, Cycling, Green" is a way to promote more bicycle use in daily life, Rudolf Bekink, the Dutch ambassador, said last Friday. The Netherlands has annual bicycle holidays.

People who would like to join the event in Beijing have until May 17 to register on hollandbikeday.cn by answering several questions about the history and culture of the Netherlands. Only 10 people will be chosen to join the main competitions on May 24.

The festival will include fun contests like a bicycle steeplechase, a paired race and slow bicycle riding.

China was once a country on bicycle wheels, but now more and more people are opting for cars. The Netherlands, which has a population of 16 million, has 18 million bicycles. The capital Amsterdam is regarded as Europe's "city of bicycles."

The ambassador, Bekink, said Dutch people spend €1.6 billion (15 billion yuan) on bicycles every year, including bike accessories. And they cycle a combined 14 billion



Holland has been called the "kingdom of bicycles."

Photo provided by the Dutch Embassy

kilometers each year.

According to statistics, most Dutch people travel less than 7.5 kilometers during a single car ride. Because driving short distances emits more carbon dioxide, the Dutch prefer to travel these distances on their bike.

The landscape in the Netherlands is also suitable for cycling. "In our country, most cities are as flat as Beijing, so

bicycles are the first choice for transportation," Bekink said.

The ambassador said he encourages staff members at his embassy to ride bikes as much as possible. "During last year's Olympic Games, we provided bicycles for our staff and encouraged them to go out by bicycle. It is not only good for our health, but also benefits the environment," he said.

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Bebop meets French fine dining



The Xia Jia Trio performs original compositions and their arrangements of jazz standards.

Photo by Leon Lee

By Zhang Dongya

The capital's finest beboppers take center stage at the Maison Boulud every Thursday and Friday evening starting at 10 pm.

Since "more and more people have called and booked" to watch the jazz show that began this month, the restaurant decided to extend its run until July, Ignace Lecleir, its general manager, said. A Saturday performance will be added beginning next month.

Maison Boulud, one of the city's fine dining French restaurants, opened last July at the former US Embassy compound in Qianmen constructed in 1930. Maison builds on its location's rich history and the refined flavors of contemporary French cuisine.

Every month, the restaurant's menu has special offerings from different French regions. For May, it introduced the cuisine in the

country's southwest.

It also invited four jazz trios, including Christophe Lier's group from France. This was a new move for Maison, which proved to be successful. The performances "created a great atmosphere and the guests enjoyed them a lot," Lecleir said.

French pianist and composer Lier's trio performs both originals and contemporary arrangements of jazz classics. Its style, deeply rooted in bebop, switches gears between bop, double-time swing, montuno and bossa nova, making each night a musical exploration.

"It's the most creative art form in the world for me," Jimmy Biala, the trio's drummer, said of jazz. "[It is] not just music, but how you create and express." Though most jazz music does not contain lyrics, Biala compared them to "poems," in which everyone takes away some profound meaning or insight.

The lineup of performers next month has already been finalized: the Xia Jia Trio on Thursdays, the Moreno Donadel Trio on Fridays and the Christophe Lier Trio on Saturdays.

Italian pianist Moreno Donadel has been a fixture in Beijing's jazz scene for 10 years, and he has been a teacher to many of the younger musicians in town. His wide repertoire extends from bebop a la Bud Powell to Afro-Cuban in the tradition of Chucho Valdes. His group will play jazz standards as well as arrangements with a Latin flair.

The Chinese trio is named after its leader Xia Jia, crowned by the media as the "Prince of Jazz Piano" and the keyboard player for Cui Jian, the "Father of Chinese Rock." Since returning to the country from studies at the Eastman School of Music in New York, Xia has been instrumental in setting the bar for

the city's jazz scene as the keyboard player of the Red Hand jazz band and the conductor of the Beijing City Jazz Orchestra.

The Xia Jia Trio will perform original compositions and their arrangements of jazz standards.

Biala, the Christophe Lier Trio's percussionist, will regroup on June 20 with Jorg Tannenbaum on the electric guitar and Sebastian Meyer on the double bass. Their repertoire is a throwback to the golden age of Blue Note records, reminiscent of Grant Green, Wes Montgomery and Kenny Burrell.

"It's a perfect match to play the finest jazz in town at the best French restaurant here," Leon Lee, an event organizer, said, adding that the building's acoustics is good.

Maison Boulud

Where: 23 Qianmen Dong Dajie, Chongwen District
Tel: 6559 9200

Wanted: Museums low on carbon emissions

By He Jiamwei

Design exhibitions to address climate change will simultaneously be held in 15 countries. The project, organized by a group of designers from Britain and China, was born in a 16-hour workshop in Beijing early this week.

Alex Mowat, director of Urban Salon, a London-based architecture and design studio, guided nine Chinese young designers to figure out how to develop sustainable materials for museums and how to promote low carbon emissions through exhibitions.

Each of the participants first wrote down his or her ideas, which the group then discussed. A visit to the China Resources Land exhibition pavilion, a building covered with grass, became the catalyst.

The green building reminded participants of similar structures they had seen in other countries, which reflected a harmony between buildings and nature. They then picked 15 cities in various countries, located an abandoned building in each one, then thought of how to decorate them with plants.

They brought their designs to life on the computer, then showed each other the print outs. They decided the next step would be to hold an exhibition on the subject.

The workshop on Monday and Tuesday was part of the British Council's events for Culture and Climate Change Week. From Monday to Friday, the British Council organized a series of workshops and seminars for students, designers and museum directors to envision low-carbon-emitting museums and to discuss how culture and the arts can become a tool in understanding climate change.

Judith Nesbitt, chief curator of Tate Britain, highlighted a number of successful sustainability practices at the Tate. "We have a carbon fund and calculate the carbon footprint in our daily work, including the transportation of works in touring exhibitions and staff going on business trips," she said. A carbon footprint is the total amount of greenhouse gas emissions caused directly and indirectly by an individual, organization, event or product.



The low-carbon-emission workshop

Photo provided by British Council

The museum also uses electricity-saving lamps and recycled writing paper.

Nesbitt believes there are two key obstacles in establishing low-carbon-emitting museums. One is their lighting system; the other, their heating system.

"It is a controversial issue — using more natural light — even in Britain. Some will say too much natural light will hurt artistic works.

But some artists are surprised that their works look better in natural light," she said.

Heating uses up a lot of energy in huge museums like the Tate. Nesbitt says they are opting for natural ventilation and maximizing the use of waste heat. "We will decrease the usage of air conditioners and will control the number of visitors during busy hours," she said.

Event

Drink for Pink Charity Cocktail

This is a fun event to help raise funds to fight breast cancer in Beijing, and proceeds will go to the Breast Disease Center of the Peking Union Medical College Hospital. The center sees more than 120 patients per day and strives to help them fight the disease, which has become one of the leading causes of death among Chinese women.

When: May 15, 6:30 – 8:30 pm

Where: Embassy House, 18 Dongzhimen Xiaojie, Dongcheng District

Tel: 8449 9888

Cost: 300 yuan per person

Artist's Workshops for Families at UCCA

Young artist Ding Ding will conduct the workshop and share fairy tales with children and introduce them to fairies and strange creatures through installations. The children will then paint their favorite person, and the artist will teach each family how to sew a toy according to the children's painting. Organizers suggest that child participants be between four and 12 years old. They must be accompanied by an adult.

When: May 17, 10 am – 12 pm

Where: Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA), 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

Tel: 8459 9269

Cost: 120 yuan for members; 150 yuan for non-members

No Name Trio

The No Name Trio, composed of a Frenchman, an American and a Chinese member, bring it up a notch with French acoustic jazz, showcasing their sublime Django-inspired French swing and waltzes.

When: May 21, 9:30 pm – 11:30 pm

Where: Jianghu Bar, 7 Dongmianhua Hutong, (west of Jiadaokou Nan Dajie), Dongcheng District

Tel: 13269227168

Woodie Alan CD Release and Reunion

US singer-guitarist Alan Paul and his band Woodie Alan will celebrate the release of their debut CD, *Beijing Blues*, with reunion performances in town. Rather than hold a single CD release show, the blues band members opted to visit their favorite haunts, giving fans a chance to get up close and personal with them.

When: May 21, 9 pm – 12:30 am

Where: Stone Boat Bar (southwest corner of Ritan Park), Chaoyang District

Tel: 13911728921

(By Zheng Lu)

Equestrian association organizes trips to Xinjiang



Participants of horseback-riding trip to Kanas in 2008

Photo provided by China Equestrian Web

By Annie Wei

The Chinese Equestrian Association is organizing four horseback-riding trips to Kanas, Xinjiang, next month. The first trip on June 5 to 11 is already fully booked. Interested parties should book soon.

The Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in the west borders eight countries: Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Pakistan, Mongolia, India and Afghanistan. With oases making up five percent of its land area, Xinjiang has a unique ecosystem and plenty of tourist attractions.

Kanas, known as the "Chinese Alps," is one of the country's top scenic spots. It boasts of natural landscapes, multiple ecosystems, a wide open prairie, forests and snow-capped mountains.

Since the spring of 2007, the Chinese Equestrian association has successfully organized five trips on horseback to Kanas, in which at

least 100 people have joined.

Participants will travel to Ili Zhaosu, the hometown of the Ili steed and heaven to domestic horse lovers. If the schedule allows, travelers will get a chance to take a close look at the horses and even make a purchase.

The Ili Horse Race Festival, the biggest in the Xinjiang region, is held in Lucaogou from the end of May to the beginning of June each year. "Any horse fan should not miss that," Wutzala of the equestrian association said.

To date, the association has organized more than 40 rides,

including a 600-kilometer endurance ride in Xiwu County, Inner Mongolia; a 150-kilometer ride around Guanting reservoir in Hebei Province; and the Grazier Queen VS Super Cowboy Competition.

The association's Web site horse.org.cn provided assistance to athletes, horse trainers, judges, coaches and clubs ahead of the Beijing Olympics's equestrian competitions. It is offering the same service for the upcoming Asian Games in 2010.

Cost

Each participant will be charged 3,800 yuan. This covers

transportation, and food and lodging from Urumqi.

Insurance

Each participant will be fully insured by the China Sports Insurance Broker Company: 400,000 yuan as accident insurance, 32,000 yuan as medical insurance and 12,000 yuan as first aid insurance.

Registration

Visit horse.org.cn to download the registration form. Fill it in and send it back to chenfen02@hotmail.com. For more information, call 8552 3996 or 15901125990.

Schedule

First trip:	June 5-11	Will reach Urumqi on June 4, before noon; fully booked
Second trip:	June 12-18	Will reach Urumqi on June 11, before noon
Third trip:	June 19-25	Will reach Urumqi on June 18, before noon
Fourth trip:	June 26 - July 1	Will reach Urumqi on June 25, before noon

China Airlines launches mobile check-in service

By Wang Yu

Passengers who take China Airlines flights now have a new check-in option. The airline, in cooperation with Beijing Capital International Airport and China Mobile, launched its mobile check-in service last Saturday.

China Airlines began testing the service on April 30 and said it received positive feedback from passengers. The service will be available on all domestic routes from Beijing to all destinations except Tibet. The service is not yet offered to infants, the handicapped and those who have special needs.

Travelers who check in using their mobile phone need to ensure the device works on China Mobile's net-

work. Users are advised to activate their GPRS service either at a China Mobile office or through its hotline with the help of an operator.

There are two ways to obtain the code that works in lieu of a boarding pass.

Customers who booked their tickets online, and who have earlier provided the necessary personal information, can check in on mcki.airchina.com using any computer terminal. The code will be sent to their mobile phones.

Other passengers should log on to the check-in site, choose their preferred seats, and provide the required personal information and their phone number. The code, together with a password, will be

sent to their mobile phone.

Travelers who check in online and who do not have any luggage to check in do not need to go through the check-in counter anymore.

Staff at Capital Airport's entrance and security inspection area will check the code sent to the passenger's mobile phone. People who have already checked in but who want to cancel their flight need to do so two hours before departure.

Wang Ronghua, director of the Civil Aviation Administration, said they have tested the security and dependability of China Airlines' new system to make sure passengers' personal information are not compromised.



Check-in by cellphone at the airport
CFP Photo

ASK Beijing Today

Email your questions to: weiyi@ynet.com

What's the market rate for English teachers who tutor adults and kids at English training centers? They offered me 240 yuan for an hour and 40 minutes. Is this the going rate in town, because it seems pretty low? Please give me some advice.

You can get 400 yuan an hour if you're teaching in a specialized field such as legal English. But for that kind of money, employers will want a law degree. Standard English lessons cost between 150 and 200 yuan per hour, so what you were offered isn't very low.

Can you suggest a good calling card to call the US from Beijing? I've been using one that costs 136 yuan, but it doesn't last very long. I want to call using my phone, not Skype, MSN or any other Internet-based service.

Most street-side newspaper kiosks sell the 17900 IP Card, which costs around 50 to 100 yuan. With the card, calls to the US and Canada cost 0.30 yuan per minute.

Where can I buy root beer here? I've tried April Gourmet, Parkson and Ginza Mall but haven't found any.

Check out Jenny Lou's grocery store in Sanlitun.

Where: 6 Sanlitun Bei Xiaojie, Chaoyang District

Tel: 6416 9281

Or you can try the city's A&W Root Beer supplier.

Tel: 8161 5099

I just arrived in Beijing for work, and would like a place to live for at least half a year, preferably with foreigners and near Dongzhimen subway station. I'm only looking to rent a room, and my budget is less than 1,500 yuan a month. Thanks in advance.

Try looking for a place in Huilongguan community, near Huilongguan subway station. The rent there is cheaper than in the Dongzhimen area, and it takes less than half an hour to get from Huilongguan to Dongzhimen subway stop.

I'm looking for locations of the gym called "Hokay." I don't know its Chinese name so I can't find it on the Internet. Can you help me out?

Hokay's Chinese name is Haotai. Below are some of its branches:

Huidong Gym

Where: Middle Floor, Building B, Fusheng Dasha, 4 Huixin Dong Jie, Chaoyang District

Tel: 8466 3555

Rongjin Gym

Where: Jia 2, Beisihuan Xi Lu, Haidian District

Tel: 8268 2688

(By Sima Hao)

When living

Will the

By He Jianwei

When the Japanese army captured the then capital city of Nanjing 72 years ago, it began a campaign of some of the worst atrocities in human history. After looting the city, burning down numerous historical buildings and executing all the prisoners of war, the soldiers turned to other brutalities the tamest of which was rape. Within six weeks, more than 300,000 residents were dead.

The West is very familiar with Nazi war crimes during World War II, and these have been the subject of many hit films like *Schindler's List*, *The Pianist* and *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*. But few Westerners learn about Japan's war crimes, especially those committed in Nanjing; few Japanese hear of them either.

To make a film about the Massacre that would appeal to international audiences was a task that took Chinese director Lu Chuan the last four years. His *City of Life and Death* broke 150 million yuan since it hit theaters April 22. But the Chinese audiences and movie critics who lauded the film before its release are singing a different tune today.

City of Life and Death revisits the Japanese invasion of Nanjing in 1937 to tell the story through several characters historical and fictional: a Chinese soldier, a schoolteacher, a Japanese soldier, a foreign missionary and John Rabe, the Nazi businessman who saved thousands of Chinese civilians.

Avoiding the anger, brutality and ferocity of previous filmmakers, Lu depicts the war from a humane angle rather than opposing straw men of good and evil.

Before it was in theaters, almost all media groups gave previous space to covering the film and singing its praise. Early critics said "the intellectuals are beginning to rethink history" or were "showing humanistic care through the camera."

But when ordinary viewers went to the theater, that tune changed. The film was declared to have a "bad story," and Lu was declared to be sympathizing with "the enemy."

Plot: solid or meandering

Lu selected several characters to represent personal stories of the massacre: a charismatic Chinese soldier who fights the Japanese army until he dies; Rabe's secretary and a schoolteacher who help Rabe save the civilians in the "safe zone," but who spare no efforts to save themselves; a woman in the "safe zone" who sacrifices herself to help her compatriots by volunteering to serve as a prostitute for the invading army; and a Japanese soldier who struggles with the brutality he has witnessed and ultimately commits suicide.

Before making the movie, Lu used archive footage and photos. He visited Sichuan Province, which houses the remains of the victims from the last 60 to 70 years.

Lu read Ogishima Shizuo's Diary, which was in charge of cremations.

Some of the characters are based on real people, such as the fighting in the streets.

Although Lu tried to tell the story, he said it turned the plot into a meal.

That is not to say the plot is slow. Like the Chinese soldier. For the Japanese, it's better to show the high pressure of the war, says Raymond Zhou, a cultural critic.

A netizen, Yin Xiang, on doubt, a soldier dies immediately and the film is facing comfort women. Killing and rape.

The director used a lot of close-ups, some of which were touching for viewers, through the executions and rapes.

Angle: Japanese or Chinese

In this film, the director explores the perspective of the aggressor.

A young Japanese soldier na



is torture

Nanking Massacre ever be without dispute?

spent months collecting materials and visited Jianchuan Museum in Anren, China's largest private collection of relics

ary, the war diary of a Japanese soldier from August 1937 to March 1940. Based on those materials and recordings, and the woman who became a prostitute. Stories from different views, some people rendering mess.

uggish, but "some characters are flat, Japanese soldier, it would have been placed on them by the Japanese imperial critic, said.

an.com agreed with Zhou. "The Chinese last 80 minutes are all the conflicts and raping simplifies the story."

re-ups in the black and white film, many rs. Some stifled tears in the theater

Chinese

res a historical wound through the eyes

named Kadokawa is the film's focal

point: he is sensitive and unsophisticated, and kills because it is his job as a soldier.

Kadokawa's life is a tragedy. He loves a Japanese comfort woman, but cannot save her. He shoots a Chinese schoolteacher who asks him to kill so she won't be raped by soldiers. He saves two Chinese civilians and commits suicide because he cannot live with the guilt.

Many of his opponents say Lu sympathizes with the "enemy," criticism Lu challenges as being an emotional response born of Nanjing's wound.

One of Lu's goals for this film was to get it screened in Japan. "If this was just about China, I could have never secured a project timetable of four years," Lu said when he and his crew met college students at Peking University earlier this month.

He studied international relations in college and knew there was no institution in Japan capable of blocking the import of a movie. He already found a distributor and has prepared the show for its Japanese debut. "I believe this movie is something easier for the Japanese to watch than to make," he said.

He said he never imagined using the Japanese soldier's view would cause so much rage. "It is simply a filmmaking technique, and was never intended to be an expression of my emotions."

But no matter from which angle, the director said two facts cannot be denied: the massacre happened, and China resisted.

"In the past 60 years, we always sob over this. But the Japanese never apologize for their war crimes. We are going to have to talk to them using 'language' they understand, like appeals to human rights and anti-war rhetoric."

History: true or fictional

Although many episodes of the film are true, audiences said the director's treatment of Rabe is especially unfair.

Almost simultaneously, another movie about the Nanking Massacre, *John Rabe*, began showing in theaters. In Lu's film, Rabe is cast in only a supporting role. He said Rabe is worthy of respect, but that "Rabe is not the top in my list of massacre heroes. That place belongs to the American missionary Wilhelmina Vautrin (who saved the lives of many women at the Ginling Girls College in Nanjing and committed suicide in 1941, haunted by the images she saw and feelings of responsibility) and American historian and journalist Iris Chang (known for the best-selling *The Rape of Nanking* and committing suicide in 2004 because of depression)."

Lu said he did not decry Rabe's efforts in the film. "The Nanjing Massacre is an event in which the Chinese and the Japanese are the main players. On numbers alone, the Chinese and Japanese cast should be 99 percent of the action, leaving only one percent for Rabe," he said.

But when the film screened in Nanjing, Professor at Nanjing University and Curator of the John Rabe and International Safety Zone Memorial Hall Tang Daoluan walked out and accused Lu of distorting history.

But making a movie is an art form. It is about telling a story based on history to communicate the filmmaker's message. That message comes in the Japanese soldier's final thoughts before killing himself, sometimes "living is more torturous than dying."



CFP Photos

Short story writer haunted by despair, resentment and lust

By Charles Zhu

Over my years of reading and translating John Cheever, America's Chekhov, I had always been charmed by his fluent and witty style and his tweedy grace and gentility as a New Englander who spoke with an excellent faux-Brahmin accent.

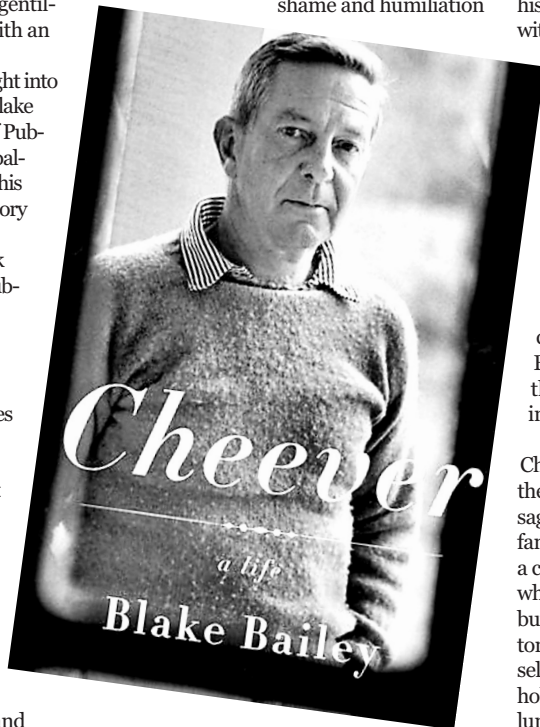
I changed my mind as I found insight into the inner demons of the author from Blake Bailey's *Cheever: A Life* (770pp, Knopf Publishing Group, US \$35). Bailey makes balanced analyses and interpretations of this extraordinary and often self-contradictory author in this literary biography.

The world got a more personal look at the author in *Home Before Dark*, published in 1984 by his daughter Susan Cheever. His letters appeared in 1988, and excerpts from his journals in 1990 and 1991. Now, with Bailey's work, we are given a complete picture that weaves together those scattered materials.

Bailey reveals from Cheever's own journals his sorry story of incest with his brother Freddie; his contempt for and perennial war with his wife; his chronic alcoholism and his relentless sexual predation. The picture is a sharp contrast to the usual public image of the author who, dressed in a turtleneck Shetland sweater, lived comfortably in an affluent New England suburb and seemed to have all the blessings one could hope for.

The Cheevers settled in the Massachusetts Bay Colony in the 17th century. The family history was one of financial ruin, alcoholism, solitude, madness and suicide. John Cheever was born to a traveling shoe salesman's family in 1912 on Boston's South Shore in Quincy. His grandfather died of "alcohol and opium" delirium tremens, alone in "squalid lodgings" in a

Boston neighborhood of "shabby immigrant" tenements. His mother, who drank herself to death, had owned a gift shop in Quincy. This became a constant source of shame and humiliation



for Cheever, who was convinced that his parents were "poor and outcast" not because of their bad luck or indifference to material success, but "because they were, at bottom, strange and vulgar people."

He was expelled from the Thayer Academy for displays of laziness and rudeness. However, the event turned out to be a blessing when it inspired him to write a short story carried by the presti-

gious *New Republic*. Thus he began his literary career in which he produced a total of 121 short stories.

Bailey explored John's relationship with his elder brother Fred. John Cheever dealt with the relationships among siblings in his short story "Goodbye, My Brother" and in the novel *Falconer*. It was a relationship of confusion and contradiction, attraction and repulsion.

Cheever's art focused on the world of the 1950s and 1960s, when people were sexually repressed but economically affluent in America's suburbs. He brilliantly portrayed this dual world in his stories. He exposed the magic and eccentricity of American suburban life, mostly set in New England, but also revealed the misery that was seething beneath the seemingly quiet surface of gentility.

As Bailey's new biography shows, Cheever, who produced such books as the semi-autobiographical *Wapshot* family saga, had his own life and members of his family portrayed artistically. He presented a charming public image before visitors who came to his Westchester home, but was internally gripped with extreme torment and loneliness. He became so self-loathing that he turned to severe alcoholism, sucking down gin even before lunch. He waged a relentless and often futile struggle against his own person, his sexual impulse and his despair.

With a unique access to the Cheever estate archives, Bailey offers a biography with great detail of virtually every sexual encounter, hangover and twist and turn Cheever experienced. Bailey convinces us that in spite of all, we should be grateful to Cheever, who as a story maker conveyed to readers so many witty stories that gave them rare moments of joy.

Posthumous publication violates author's last will



By He Jianwei

For many non-Chinese readers, Eileen Chang is best known as the author of *Lust, Caution*, the inspiration for Ang Lee's 2007 film. But for Chinese readers, Chang is one of the most important authors of the last century for her insight into human nature and the tensions of romance.

Last month, her last book *Xiao Tuan Yuan* (*Little Reunion*, 283pp, Beijing October Arts & Literature Publishing House, 28 yuan), a semi-autobiographic novel, depicts the author's relations with her family members and a bitter love story with her first husband Hu Lancheng, a col-

laborator for the Japanese during World War II. Readers can find echoes of the love affairs in *Lust, Caution*.

This book was, according to Chang's last will, not intended to be published, but to be destroyed upon her death in 1995.

Roland Soong inherited the legal right to administer Chang's works from his parents, the scholar Stephen Soong and Mae Fong Soong, who were close friends and supporters of Chang.

Roland Soong's decision to publish anyway rekindles the memory of Max Brod, who published Franz Kafka's last work against his will.

Chang started the book in May 1975 and hurried to finish it in four months. In a letter to Roland's parents, Chang wrote one of the reasons she hurried to finish the book was that Hsi-Ning Chu, a Taiwanese writer, asked Chang whether he could write a biography for her based on her first husband's memory.

At that time, Hu lived in Chu's house in Taiwan, and Chang refused Chu's proposal because it would "depersonalize" herself from readers' expectations.

To many readers, Chang's personal life is mysterious. She came from a declining aristocratic family and had an affair with a supporter of the Japanese during World War II.

But finally Chang never wrote her autobiography. She chose the novel to recall the memories of her family members and her first marriage.

Maybe because she soon finished the book, in the later part of the book, Chang revealed all her life's details, including more raw topics like abortion and making love. "When I mentioned my life in the book, I showed no mercy on myself. I think it's better for me to reveal everything on my own," Chang wrote.

Some critics believe this book can represent Chang's late works. "It's a path-breaking book among Chang's works," Nan-fang Shuo, a cultural critic, said.

But some preferred it as a novel rather than an autobiography. Chen Zishan, professor of Shanghai-based East China Normal University and a Chang expert, said Chang loved to read *A Flower in a Sinful Sea* in her youth, which is a novel alluding to her grandparents' love story. By the same token, *Xiao Tuan Yuan* is a novel alluding to Chang's early life.

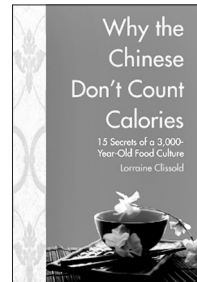
No matter how much of what was written is real, Chang's penetrating observations of human relations are sure to thrill her readers. As the writer once said, "Human nature is the most interesting book that can never be finished in a lifetime."

Bookworm book listing

Vivian Wang from the Bookworm recommends the following best sellers to *Beijing Today* readers.

Why the Chinese Don't Count Calories: 15 Secrets from a 3,000-Year-Old Food Culture

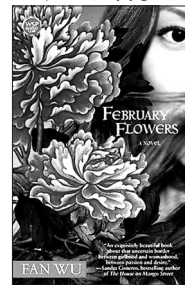
By Lorraine Clissold, 288pp, Skyhorse Publishing, US \$12.95



During Clissold's 10-year journey into the 3,000-year-old Chinese food culture, she discovers the 15 secrets that make it possible to enjoy delicious meals three times a day, and keep slim and feel fitter. The book brings a commonsense approach to eating – one which has worked for billions of people over thousands of years – into American kitchens for the first time.

February Flowers

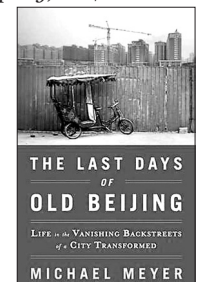
By Fan Wu, 256pp, Washington Square Press, US \$14.95



Set in modern China, *February Flowers* tells the stories of two young women's journeys to self-discovery and reconciliation with the past. Seventeen-year-old Ming and 24-year-old Yan have very little in common other than studying at the same college. Ming, idealistic and preoccupied, lives in her own world of books, music and imagination. Yan, by contrast, is sexy but cynical, beautiful but wild, with no sense of home. When the two meet and become friends, Ming's world is forever changed. But their differences in upbringing and ideology ultimately drive them apart, leaving each to face her dark secret alone.

The Last Days of Old Beijing: Life in the Vanishing Backstreets of a City Transformed

By Michael Meyer, 384pp, Walker & Company, US \$16.00



Weaving historical vignettes of Beijing and China over a thousand years, Michael Meyer captures the city's deep past as he illuminates its present, especially the destruction of its ancient neighborhoods and the eradication of a way of life that has epitomized the capital. With an insider's insight, the book is an invaluable witness to history, bringing into shining focus the ebb and flow of life in old Beijing at this pivotal moment.

(By He Jianwei)

Tabletop games a way to unplug

By Sima Hao

Whether you call up a few friends to play or challenge a crowd of strangers, a tabletop game is a great way to overcome shyness and talk with people. A growing number of young Chinese players are discovering what has been a household pastime in Western countries for decades.

But in China, where entertainment has been dominated by sports and video games for 20 years, the unplugged face-to-face contact characteristic of the tabletop game has a profound effect on its players.



There's never a shortage of people rushing to the latest fads, but every fad has to start somewhere. But even for the players who have been at it the longest, the charm of the tabletop game is hard to shake.

What is tabletop game?

You've probably played one before, even if you never heard the term.

"Tabletop" is an umbrella term to refer to board games, card games, dice games, miniature war games, tile-based games and other games normally played on a flat surface. The term also distinguishes role-playing games from role-playing video games, although role-playing games do not always require a playing surface.

Games like chess and checkers are considered board games. Other games with mixed attributes are more difficult to categorize: Monopoly, for example, uses a board, cards and dice together.

These games have seen new popularity the last few months. For tabletop gaming, Pin+Space is one of the most experienced stores in Jianwai SOHO. Liu Yiyang, a woman in her 20s, opened it after returning from cello study in France. "In France, almost every family has a stash of tabletop games. I

played a lot of them in my spare time," Liu says.

Liu stays late to help customers learn how to play. "So far, there are around 3,000 games, and hundreds of new ones come out each year," she says.

While the gaming medium is popular in the West, it is strangely missing in China outside the commonly seen mah-jongg and Chinese chess.

But Hong Xuan, a graphic designer, says there is no question the games have universal appeal. Hong has been a board game fan ever since his first visit to Pin+Space two years ago. "[The games are] so interesting and fascinating. The first time I went it was a weekend, so we played from afternoon till night. I have been a fan of tabletop games ever since," he says.

Face-to-face and unplugged

Nowadays, since so many people spend their days and nights in front of the computer, tabletop games have also become known as "unplugged games."

People stuck in a virtual world often neglect a basic need for face-to-face communication. Playing tabletop games brings players together away from the machines for a more real social experience than what one gets online.

"Some customers come alone. But once they sit down and join in, they start talking. Some even leave as friends," Liu said.

Get smart

Maybe you know numbers and figures, or maybe you have an excellent

memory and business sense. Maybe you are skilled at devising strategies from within a command tent, or maybe you are persuasive. Mastering any tabletop game requires some skill.

"When playing tabletop games, you meet all sorts of people. You can learn something from other players by analyzing, observing and using your brain," Hong says. Different tabletop games can bring out their players' natural advantages.

"You might learn something new about yourself. For example, if you find you have a knack for winning at financial games, then you may want to become a financial planner. Anything is possible," Hong says.

Looking for the old and the refreshing



The store has a cozy, countryside flavor.



Simple-designed spoons do not come cheap.

Photos by Song Nannan

La Petit Chat on Gulou Dong Dajie

This shop was born in 2002, in one corner of Sculpting in Time cafe's Weigongcun branch. The cafe, which also screens art films and sells custom-made jewelry, opened its first branch on a small street between Peking University and Tsinghua University more than 10 years ago.

La Petit Chat recently set up another shop on Gulou Dong Dajie – the most fashionable street on the east side. The owner said on La Petit's Web site that every shop is a home, and every home has a different theme set at a different time. The words were proven correct at the first sight of the shop's newest location.

It shares the same atmosphere of comfort and ease as its Old Beijing location near the Drum and Bell Tower. Its decor has a cozy, countryside flavor, with plants lining the entrance and old vacuum flasks sitting on the window ledge.

The shop is not as big as its neighbors, so the merchandise is displayed in a smart, space-saving way: A long table in the middle of the room is stacked with wooden shelves and display cases that contain tableware, stationery, even computer keyboard brushes.

Most of its silver necklaces and pendants are imported from Thailand and India; the stone bead necklaces come from Nepal. There are flower-shaped paperweights made of white Japanese ceramic, which combines artistry and practicality. Fabric from Italy and Hong Kong is also on sale, but it is not for bargain hunters.

The shop is enveloped by a fragrance emanating from a corner that displays hand-made soaps and bottles of essential oil. Below one window is a sink where customers can try out the soaps.

In another corner is a bookshelf with magazines such as *Monocle* and *Paper and Booda*, a Taiwan publication. People who get achy legs from shopping along the street can drop in, take a seat and read one or two pages from a magazine.

Where: 47 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

Open: 11:30 am – 9 pm

Tel: 8302 8441

Web site: lpchatshop.com/

Ruxi

Hutong residents think Nanluoguxiang has become a shadow of its former beauty since it became a big tourist spot in the past year. On its opposite side is Beiluoguxiang, which has remained relatively untouched due to unresolved property development and design issues.

Local residents said that in olden times, the rich lived on Beiluoguxiang, the northern part of the street, while the lower classes lived on the opposite side. This Old Beijing life became the inspiration for Ruxi, a clothing store in the northern hutong.

The shop was opened in February by Xue Wenjia and her boyfriend Fu Bin who both graduated from art schools. "The space is actually a temporary structure outside a courtyard. It was not well designed, so the length of two sides is not equal. But it just make it special," Fu said.

The shop, which has a white theme color, is made up of two rooms separated by the entrance to the courtyard where Fu and Xue live. One of the rooms display shirts, dresses, pants and shoes.

Most of them are made of flax or similarly comfortable materials. Japanese-style cups and bottles on a shelf facing the window show the owners' preference for light colors. The ceiling is also covered with flax fabric.

The other room is Xue's workshop, and hanging from the wall are her original design bags. At 100 yuan per piece, it is no surprise stocks are always sold out.

"She began her clothing and bag designs in college as a hobby," said Fu, who majored in traditional Chinese painting and is now a painting teacher. Fu said he hopes to add more traditional elements to their products.

"We don't want factories to make our designs because mass manufacturing goes against our original idea, and will lose the unique quality of hand-made products," Fu said.

Where: 101 Beiluoguxiang, Dongcheng District

Open: 11:30 am – 9 pm

Tel: 15810062523

Web site: shop37056090.taobao.com/



Old Beijing life became the inspiration for Ruxi.

Photo by Song Nannan



Cotton bags are "in" this season.

Photo provided by Ruxi



The store is located on quiet Guozijian Jie.

Photo by Song Nannan

Lost & Found

Guozijian Jie, lined with cafes and bars, is an ideal place for crowd-weary tourists to chill out. Among the establishments there is Lost & Found, a shop that looks and feels like home.

Old household items like electric fans, clocks and mirrors occupy almost every surface of the store. The coating of rust on the items shows their age.

When old household products, like vacuum flasks, became the rage last year, Lost & Found worked with an old vacuum flask factory to create them in a variety of designs and sizes. Each flask is patiently stenciled by hand.

There are plenty of chairs for sale in the shop, designed according to popular models that came

out 10 years ago. A soft office chair was made based on an original piece found on the riverbank under Andingmen Bridge. An "old man's chair" was inspired by the mass-produced government-issued armchairs of the 1960s.

None of these old-style items come cheap. But apart from shopping, Lost & Found provides Beijingers a place to reminisce about the past, and gives foreigners a glimpse of Chinese life 30 or 40 years ago.

Where: 42 Guozijian Jie, Dongcheng District

Open: 11:30 am – 9 pm

Tel: 6401 1855

Web site: lost-and-found.cn/

By Wang Yu

Living in a metropolis with its humongous malls and brand-name shops in every corner can be a dampener for people who want to dress and live distinctively. But hope for originality lives in old sections of the city, in its *hutong* and in entrepreneurs who weave together the past and the present.

This week, *Beijing Today* features three small shops that were set up to celebrate the simple beauties of life, and to provide people space for more quiet, slower paced shopping.

Authenticity that's light on the pocket

By Annie Wei

Diners are always looking for the "real deal" in foreign cuisine: food that retains the flavors of its home country, but is affordable to average people. Below are three of *Beijing Today's* choices for Thai, European and American food.



Union Bar & Grill is known for its quality US food.

Photo provided by Union

Three kinds of tapas under 30 yuan

By Annie Wei

The ambience of Scarlett is different from what it used to be: a hamburger joint by day and a club by night.

The buzz about the European restaurant began after it offered diners sets of sumptuous tapas and a glass of wine from 38 to 88 yuan.

Customers can mix and match their tapa of choice: 28 yuan for three kinds; 48 yuan for six and 68 yuan for nine.

Recommended tapa include pan-seared tuna pesto sauce, spring rolls, tortillas, piquillo peppers, eggplant caviar, assortment of marinated olives and dry sausage.

Scarlett is also known as a wine bar, and offers 80 types of red and white wines to go with cheeses and cold dishes.

The cheese platter selection (98 yuan) contains five kinds of cheeses: Reblochon Tradition AOC (France), Brie (France), Truffier (France), Queserias (Spain) and Comte Cheese AOC (France).

Customers who would like to pass on the cheeses can order the cold dish platter (68 yuan) with salami (Italy), Parma Ham (Italy), Mortadella sausage (Italy), dry sausage (Italy), air-dried ham (Spain), Pate Croute (France) and Rillettes Duck (France).

Scarlett's food is inviting, but its lighting and horrible music may keep away more discriminating diners.

It tries to live up to its name by creating a dark, seductive and mysterious atmosphere. But the lighting is just too dark; customers have a hard time reading the menu and seeing the face of their companions across the table. Here, you will completely lose the point of dressing up for a night out "to see and to be seen."

A two-woman band was playing lousy music with a bad sound system last Saturday night. People came for an intimate chat over tasty snacks and wine, but not for a dreary live music show.

Where: Jia 7, Gongti Xi Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 6-9 pm

Tel: 6552 2880

Cost: Starts at 70 yuan per person



Scarlett offers combinations of tapas.

Photo provided by Hotel-G

Bold flavors of the US

By He Jianmei

At Union Bar & Grill, jazz music is always playing in the background. On its menu are food with bold flavors, inspired by US cuisine's history of adopting the special culinary characteristics of other cultures and adjusting them to local tastes.

Opened last August, the restaurant offers guests the diversity of American cuisine using the best of Chinese ingredients. Flavors are enhanced by using fresh local produce combined with imported meat such as Australian beef and Mongolian prime rib.

The restaurant offers American favorites such as tangy barbecue baby back ribs (128 yuan), fresh sauteed sea bass (145 yuan) and char-grilled rib eye steak (230 yuan for 340 grams). All recipes were created by chef Zachary Lewison from Florida.

Lewison also put his personal touch on Japanese seared ahi tuna (55 yuan) and char-grilled king salmon (155 yuan), two popular dishes on Union's menu.

He coats the tuna with paprika, grills it to medium rare, then puts slices of the fish on a plate with vegetable salad and red wine vinaigrette to make an appetizer. "Tuna is easily done, so it needs only several seconds to grill," Lewison says. Only the edges of the tuna are cooked, and the rest of the meat is raw, but it is nothing like sashimi.

The vegetable salad with cucumber, red radish and arugula goes well with the tuna.

For the char-grilled king salmon, a main dish, Lewison picked a 230-gram piece of Norwegian salmon and grilled it to medium well. "Because we have rocks beneath the grill bars, the meat will receive the average heat temperature," the chef said.

The difficulty is judging how long to grill the meat so it's cooked to the right tenderness. Lewison touched the surface of the salmon, "I practiced a lot and it's not easy for beginners."

Besides American food, Union has a good selection of wines from various regions of the US, choices which are not available in the Chinese market.

Where: Unit S6-31, 3/F, Tower 6, The Village, 19 Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: Sunday to Thursday, 11 am - 10 pm; Friday and Saturday, 11 am - 11 pm

Tel: 6415 9117

Cost: 100 yuan

Inexpensive Thai indulgence

By Annie Wei

You can seldom go wrong with Thai food. Most Thai restaurants, however, especially those popular among expats, have their drawbacks: they are too pricey, the food is so-so and the servings are small.

But there are still inexpensive places to fulfill your craving for Thai food. One of them is Yanweidie.

The restaurant is located on Sanlitun Nan Lu, near popular Thai dining places like Pink Loft and Banana Leaf. Because of the recession, a lack of innovation and a chaotic construction site beside it, Pink Loft has temporarily closed. Jiaoye, on the other hand, resembles an enormous, raucous Chinese restaurant. It has been overly localized, and many of its dishes no longer taste Thai.

Yanweidie has a more basic menu, but which includes most classic Thai dishes. The owner, Liu Yaokai, said he wanted to make Thai food more accessible to ordinary people. He said they bring in ingredients from Thailand twice a week, and that their chef, who has more than a decade of experience preparing Thai food, refuses to handle seafood that is not fresh.

To start off, try the appetizer assortment (48 yuan), made up of pairs of pandan chicken slices, prawn cakes, fish cakes and spring rolls.

Its prawn soup (38 yuan), which is good for two hungry diners, has different layers of flavor including coconut milk. There is also the seafood salad (38 yuan) with prawns, squid fish and mushrooms.

Other recommended dishes include yellow curry prawn (68 yuan), massaman seafood in sweet curry (68 yuan), and red curry mixed vegetables (38 yuan). For dessert, sample the glutinous rice pudding with mango (25 yuan).

For 3 yuan, diners get an unlimited serving of rice.

Where: Jia 58, Sanlitun Nan Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 11 am - 10 pm

Tel: 6502 5118

Cost: 100 yuan for two



Massaman seafood in sweet curry, 68 yuan

Photo by Dai Rui

China's first electronic music festival invades 798 Art District

By Wang Yu

Three stages, 20 artists, 15 hours of performance, 10,000 spectators, 46,000 square meters of open-air space ... May 23 will be a watershed day for China's electronic music, when world-renowned electronic DJs, producers and visual artists join forces with local performers for Intro 2009 – the country's first electronic music festival.

The event, at the 798 Art District's D Park, is being organized by Acupuncture Records, Beijing's home-grown electronic label launched in 2007. Music from Acupuncture's first published album *Ebb*, released in 2008, was carried by the world's biggest electronic and DJ music download sites Beatport and Juno. It was the first time local DJs released through a Chinese label, and was seen as an important development in the country's electronic music scene.

Intro 2009's breathtaking lineup includes top-notch artists and DJs like Chris Liebing, MANDY, Italoboyz and Shin Nishimura.

Philipp, a member of the electronic duo MANDY, who has an innate understanding of what works on the dance floor, will perform on the main stage from 5 to 7 pm. The German duo had two of their most memorable DJ sessions last



year: One at the helm of UK club Fabric's mix CD series, and the other at the rain-drenched Love Parade in Germany, where they played live for half a million music lovers who refused to run for cover.

Italoboyz and Shin Nishimura have become fixtures in London's passionate

minimalist scene. Their musical expression is a fusion of sounds, themes and ideas resulting from over 15 years of DJing experience. Nishimura is one of the best known Japanese DJs and started his career in Shanghai organizing the Plus party series.

Intro by Day, the first part of the festival, kicks off at 1 pm on both the main stage and the Welcome Stage. Electronic music will be the focus and will be playing out loud until 11 pm, alongside audio-visual shows, which include sound laser performances and high-powered projections.

The second part of the celebration, Intro by Night, will be a warehouse party that will keep the electronic music marathon running.

2009 Beijing Electronic Music Festival

Where: D Park, 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: May 23, 1 pm – May 24, 4 am

Admission: 150 yuan for advance tickets until May 20; 200 yuan at the door

Web site: piaowutong.com/web/ticket/ticket_3807.htm

Tel: 400 818 3333 (Piaowutong); 13601182684 for VIP table reservations, group tickets for over 30 persons and general inquiries

Friday, May 15

Exhibition Marvin Minto Fang Sculptures

Where: Pekin Fine Arts, 241 Caochangdi Village, Cuigezhuang, Chaoyang District

When: Until June 15, Daily except Mondays and Tuesdays, 10 am – 6 pm; reservations accepted on Mondays and Tuesdays

Admission: Free
Tel: 5127 3220

The Fourth A+A

The exhibition presents paintings, installations, sculptures and multimedia works by both veteran and debuting artists.

Where: PIFO New Art Gallery, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District
When: Until May 29, daily except Mondays, 10 am – 6 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 5978 9562



Movie Milk

Where: Blend Coffee, 1354 Building 13, Jianwai SOHO West Zone, 39 Dongsanhuan Zhong Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 7 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5869 5030

Nightlife

2009 FunFair Music Festival

Where: Main stage, sky-party stage and electric music stage at Jianwai SOHO, 39 Dongsanhuan Zhong Lu, Chaoyang District; rock music stage at SOHO Shangdu, 8 Dongdaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Main stage, 12 am – 10 pm; sky-party stage, 5:30-7:10 pm; electric music stage, 9-11 pm; rock stage, 12 am – 10:15 pm
Admission: Free

Lonely China Day @ 2Kolegas

Where: 2Kolegas, 21 Liangmaqiao Lu (inside the drive-in movie theater park), Chaoyang District

When: 10 pm

Admission: 49.90 yuan

Tel: 6436 8998

Saturday, May 16

Exhibition Erehwon

Yim Tae Kyu, a South Korean who has been living in Beijing since last summer's Olympics, holds his first solo exhibition in the country.

Where: Art Seasons Beijing, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District
When: Until June 30, daily except Mondays, 11 am – 7 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 5978 9850

Wang Haiyang Solo Exhibition

Where: Today Art Museum, Pingod Community, 32 Baizhuan Lu, Chaoyang District
When: Until May 22, daily 10 am – 5 pm
Admission: 10 yuan; 5 yuan for students
Tel: 5876 0600

Movie

We Call It Techno!

Where: Kanpu Club, 8 Gongti Xi Lu, Chaoyang District
When: 10 pm

Admission: Free
Tel: 8251 2909

Nightlife Drama Night



Where: Qianren Litang, Beijing Foreign Studies University, 19 Xisanhuan Bei Lu, Haidian District

When: 7 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 8881 1114

Drabo

Where: Weibozhiyan Club, 2308 (3/F) North Building, SOHO Shangdu, 8 Dongdaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 3 pm

Admission: 40 yuan

Tel: 5900 0969

Sunday, May 17

Exhibition

Here – Chen Nong Photo Exhibition

Where: XYZ Gallery, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu Chaoyang District

When: Until May 22, daily except Monday, 11 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 8459 9299

The Domus Collection



Focusing on both Eastern and Western artists, the private collection presents seminal works that advance a new vision for contemporary benchmarks.

Where: White Space Beijing, 255 Caochangdi, Cuigezhuang, Chaoyang District

When: Until July 31, daily except Mondays, 11 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 8456 2054

Movie

La Signora Senza Camelie – Michelangelo Antonioni Movie Exhibition

Where: Duo Cafe, 3 Guowang Hutong, Jiugulou Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 7 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 8404 5129

Nightlife

Indie

Where: Weibozhiyan Club, 2308 (3/F) North Building, SOHO Shangdu, 8 Dongdaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 9 pm

Admission: 40 yuan

Tel: 5900 0969

The Redness

Where: Jianghu Bar, 7 Dongmianhua Hutong, Jiaodaokou Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 9 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6401 4611

Upcoming

Exhibition

Sheng Qi – Power of the People

Where: F2 Gallery, 319 Caochangdi, Cuigezhuang, Chaoyang District
When: May 24 – August 17, daily except Mondays, 10 am – 6 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 6432 8831

Stage in June

Concert

2009 French Piano Festival Beijing – Stephen Kovacevich Recital

Where: Forbidden City Concert Hall (inside Zhongshan Park), Dongcheng District
When: June 5, 7:30 pm
Admission: 30-380 yuan
Tel: 6559 8306

Windsbacher Knabenchor China Premiere

Where: Beijing Exhibition Theater, 135 Xizhimen Wai Dajie, Xicheng District
When: June 6, 7:30 pm
Admission: 80-380 yuan
Tel: 6831 6633

Wilderness

Who: China Opera and Dance Drama Theater

Where: Concert Hall of the National Centre for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: June 20, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-480 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Immortal Mendelssohn – Commemorating the 200th Anniversary of Felix Mendelssohn's Birth

Who: China National Opera House Symphony Orchestra
Where: Concert Hall of the National Centre for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: June 27, 7:30 pm

Admission: to be announced

Tel: 6655 0000

Dance

The Sounds of Yunnan

Who: Yang Liping, Xia Ga
Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: From June 6, 7:30 pm

Admission: 180-1,280 yuan

Tel: 5166 3124

Raymonda

Who: The Bayerische Staatsballet

Where: Opera House of the National Centre for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: June 24-26, 7:30 pm

Admission: to be announced

Tel: 6655 0000

Dream Variations – Collected Programmes

Who: The Bayerische Staatsballet

Where: Opera House of the National Centre for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: June 27, 7:30 pm

Admission: to be announced

Tel: 6655 0000

Opera

Verdi's Rigoletto

Where: Opera House of the National Centre for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: June 18-21, 7:30 pm

Admission: 280-1,080 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

(By Jackie Zhang)

By Jin Zhu

Diabetes and obesity have been on the rise for years, and sugary confections like dark chocolate have long been blamed. But new findings suggest eating limited amounts of dark chocolate may actually prevent heart disease.

Cutting heart disease risk through diet

Dark chocolate fights inflammation

A study group of 4,893 healthy individuals free of common risk factors, like high cholesterol or blood pressure, found that eating 6.7 grams of dark chocolate each day, or one small square two to three times per week, was the ideal amount for heart health. Amounts in excess lost these benefits by raising sugar levels and the risk of obesity.

A small square of dark chocolate daily protects the heart from inflammation and related disease; milk chocolate is less effective.

The study was carried out by research-

ers at Moli-sani Project, one of Europe's largest health researchers, and was published in the *Journal of Nutrition*.

Chronic inflammation of the circulatory tissue is a risk factor for cardiovascular disease. The C-reactive protein marker has to be kept under control in the blood to prevent inflammation.

"People who ate moderate amounts of dark chocolate regularly had significantly lower levels of C-reactive protein in their blood, which means their inflammation was considerably reduced," Romina di Giuseppe, lead author of the study, said.

Other healthy foods

Zhang Dawei, deputy chief physician at Beijing Traditional Chinese Medicine Hospital, said a healthy diet helps prevent heart attacks.

Beside dark chocolate, there are other foods that can lower one's risk:

Fishes

One of the best ways to help prevent and treat heart disease is to eat a low-fat diet and to replace foods rich in saturated and trans-fats with those that are rich in monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats, including omega-3 fatty acids.

Omega-3 fatty acids, which fish are rich in, are considered essential for their function of reducing blood fat.

"Omega-3 fatty acids are essential to human health but cannot be manufactured by the body. Therefore, eating fish to obtain them is extremely important," Zhang said.

Whole grains

Zhang said whole grains like barley

and products containing whole or milled barley are now allowed to claim that they cut the risk of heart disease.

"High total cholesterol levels and high levels of low density lipoprotein cholesterol are risk factors for coronary heart disease. Barley-containing foods provide at least 0.75 grams of soluble fiber per serving of the food. Such a high-fiber diet helps lower cholesterol," he said.

Whole barley and dry milled barley products such as flakes, grits, flour, meal and barley meal, are expected to bear the health claim, he said.

Antioxidant-rich produce

Dietary antioxidants, including vitamin C, vitamin E and beta carotene, are mainly found in vegetables and fruits, such as apples, bananas, *yangmei* and spinach.

Dietary antioxidants help to prevent arteriosclerosis and reduce the amount of low density lipoprotein cholesterol and achieved risk reduction.

Signs and Symptoms

Some kinds of heart disease do not have obvious symptoms. Therefore, people who have chest pain and intense sweating that persist for 30 minutes must go to see a doctor at once.

The best chance to be saved is within the first hour of a heart attack, because death occurs within 12 hours of the first feeling of chest pain.

CFP Photos

A spoonful of honey a day

By Jin Zhu

New findings from the National Headache Foundation in the US suggest that drinking honey has a remarkable ability to relieve hangovers.

"Honey contains a kind of fructose, which can accelerate the decomposition of alcohol. Among various kinds of honey, Chinese goldthread honey produces a marked effect," Lu Zetian, vice-chairman of China Bee Product Association, said.

"The complex and variable composition of honey, depending on source, season and processing, means different honey samples could cause variation in the characteristics of the finished product," he said, recommending some special Chinese honeys that are mixed with Chinese Traditional Medicine.

Winter honey

Winter honey is a special honey

made from Ivy Tree during the winter in Lingnan, an area of Guangdong and Guangxi provinces.

"Winter honey, with its light amber color, tastes sweet and a little bitter. It proves to be very good quality," Lu said.

He said besides its common use in treating excessive sweating, Winter Honey was very effective against cold, sore throat and rheumatoid arthritis.

Longan honey

Studies found that southern Longan honey protected the heart and spleen, built up blood and calmed the nerves.

"Longan honey was especially good for women as a beauty drink, and for its ability to combat insomnia and memory loss," Lu said.

Chinese milk vetch honey

Chinese milk vetch honey from springs in south China is light

amber and not very sticky. The honey helps to fight colds and reduce swelling, and is advisable for anyone with general disability.

Chinese goldthread honey

This honey is obtained from the nectar of Chinese goldthreads and has a light yellow color with a sweet and bitter taste.

Since the honey can diminish inflammation and combat internal heat, it is especially useful for people who smoke or drink too much, Lu said.

Motherwort honey

Motherwort honey is harvested on a plateau in southwest China. For women, it helps to promote circulation and treat menstrual disorders. For men, it also very effective in treating high blood pressure, coronary heart disease and nephropathy.

Ways to drink

1. The best way is dilute honey in boiled water at 40 C or less. Do not heat it or dilute it by boiling, otherwise it will taste sour and lose nutrients.
2. The best time to drink honey is between an hour and an hour and 30 minutes before meals, or two to three hours after dinner.
3. Do not eat tofu at the same time. Both honey and tofu are believed to reduce internal heat in Chinese medicine, which may cause diarrhea.



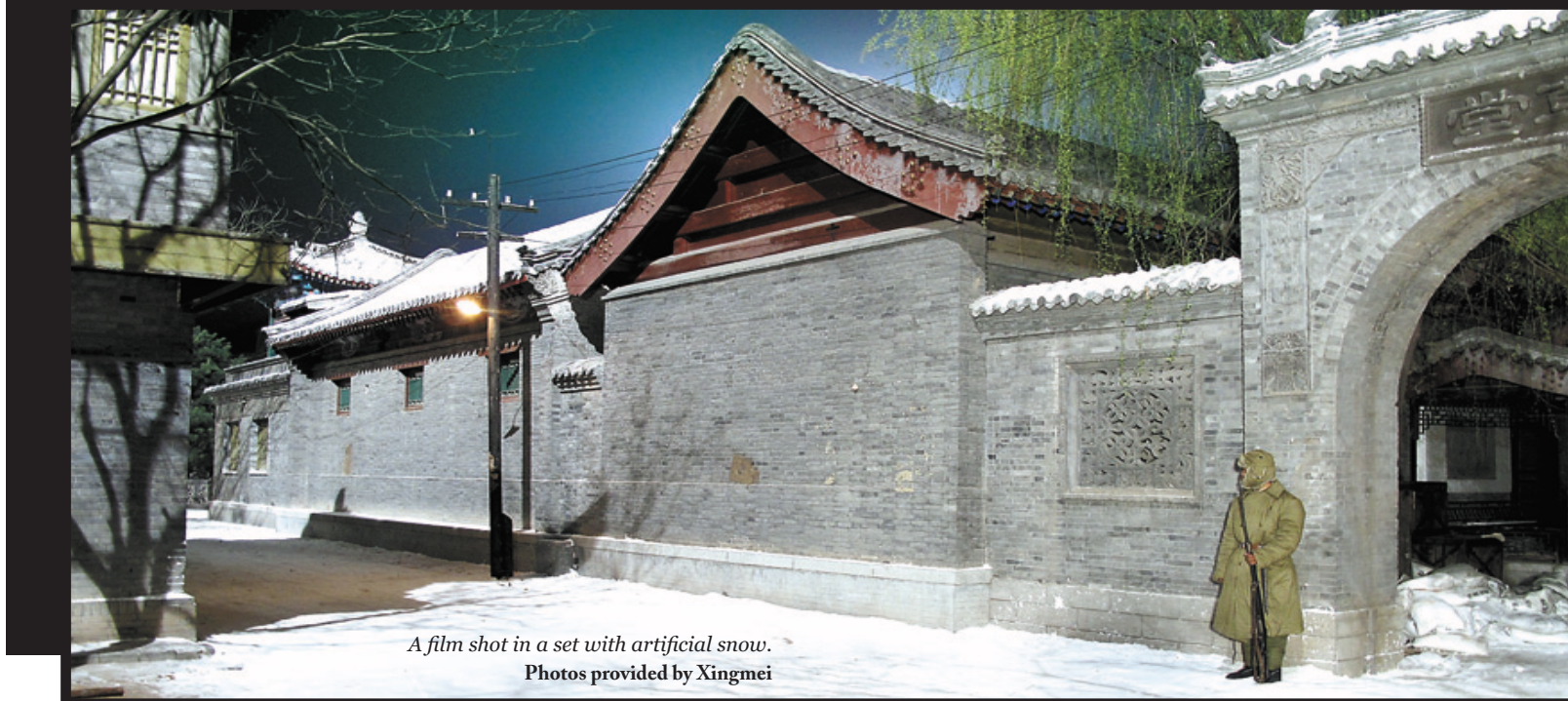
Dreaming of movies

Inside the corridors of Beijing's film and TV studios

By Zhang Dongya

A visit to the city's film studios has been added to Beijing tour packages in recent years. Visitors will tour film sets and get an up close view of costumes and props.

This month, Xingmei Film and TV Studio, one of the biggest in the country, began offering a behind-the-scenes experience for movie aficionados. The only problem may be how to pry them away from the "action."



A film shot in a set with artificial snow.
Photos provided by Xingmei

Xingmei Film and TV Studio

Established in 1995, Xingmei, originally named Feiteng, is the largest backlot in northern China. It is a popular choice among filmmakers who have explicit artistic tastes or tight budget considerations.

Located in Huairou County, the studio is divided into north and south districts, with a backlot in the south and soundstages in the north. The backlot features as many as 280 Ming and Qing-era structures, including wine shops, teahouses, pawnshops, hotels, jails, theaters, palaces, temples and government offices.

There are film sets of every season

and of various parts for the country; there is a reconstruction of a Beijing *siheyuan* or courtyard, as well as classical gardens found in Suzhou.

Filming happens at Xingmei round-the-clock, so tourists might get to see their favorite movie stars and directors. Barring that, they may walk into a chaotic street scene from the 1900s, with pedestrians dressed in period costume, old automobiles speeding down the street and guns being fired.

Empty backlots house costumes and props for rent to visitors who want to be transported to a different time and place. The cheapest cost 20 yuan for two hours of use.

To get the complete "look," visitors can hire the services of makeup artists. There are costume and makeup packages available at special prices.

One of the studio's most famous sets is the cave where Jin Yong's martial arts *Heavenly Sword and Dragon Saber* (2003) was shot. Fans of lead character Zhang Wuji can rent his costumes and act out scenes from the movie.

Another of Xingmei's treasures is a brothel straight from ancient China. A local hit TV series called *Dazhaimen*, or the Grand Mansion Gate, used it several times.

A set usually has more than one face. A

pond that was Hangzhou's West Lake in one TV series became a plain body of water in the next film. Studio guides will remind visitors of famous sceneries by asking questions like, Do you still remember the medicine shop in the film so and so?

Some houses and props are made of foam, so visitors can easily become Superman and lift a stone statue with their bare hands.

Getting there: Take Fast Bus 916 to Nanhua Shichang stop, then take a taxi to the studio

Open: 8:30 am – 5 pm

Tel: 6167 9666

Admission: 40 yuan



Visitors get into "character" with the help of makeup artists.



A tourist poses as a swordsman in ancient times.



A set of an old vinegar shop



A film's cast and crew at work

Continued on page 21...

... continued from page 20

Beiputuo Film and TV Studio

Beiputuo is one of the oldest film and television studios in town. It is the third largest in the country after the Wuxi and Zhuozhou studios run by CCTV.

Located on the southern outskirts of Beijing, in Daxing County, it is a huge and multifunctional studio where filming, training and sightseeing happen at once. Thousands of movies have been shot there, including the historical *Qianlong Dynasty* and the war story *The Soldier Boy Zhang Ga*.

Established in 1995 by TV writer Mei Zi, Beiputuo includes a free school that enrolls children from poor families and that hosts cultural exchange programs. In 1998, the story of Mei's dedication to educating poor children and preserving the country's cultural arts was told in the documentary *Beiputuo: Mei Zi's Hollywood in China*, directed by Hollywood filmmaker Erkki Kanto.

The 52-minute film features reenactments of the hardships Mei experienced in childhood, snapshots of everyday Chinese life, interviews with Beiputuo's grateful students and tours of the studio grounds and period sets.

The documentary's release overseas established the studio's reputation as "The Hollywood of the East." Many local and foreign visitors continue to pour in through Beiputuo's cultural exchange programs.

The studio offers a variety of attractions and activities for day-trippers. Its sets include the gardens from the novel *A Dream of Red Mansions*, a temple for the book's author Cao Xueqin, towns from the Ming and Qing periods, a pottery art gallery and gardens of pine, plum and bamboo.

Visitors can have their picture taken using costumes and props for rent. They can also join traditional events like temple fairs and acrobatics performances.

In olden times, the studio grounds used to be dotted with temples, which crumbled over the centuries. After the studio was set up, the temples were rebuilt, especially the Beiputuo Temple, one of the country's most well-known temple shooting locations.

"Since temples do not allow filming, Beiputuo became the ideal location when movies needed to shoot a temple scene," Mei, the studio's founder, said. "But we never expected that the temple would also serve as a place for prayer

and burning incense." Some of the worshippers even come from Daxing, Fengtai and Langfang in Hebei Province.

Getting there: Take Express Bus 1 to Demao stop, then transfer to Bus 526 to get to Beiputuo stop

Open: 8 am - 5:30 pm

Tel: 6928 1996

Admission: 28 yuan; 24 yuan for groups of over 30 people

Beijing Film Tourism City

The complex, located at the Beijing Film Studio, was opened in 1993. It has four major tourist areas: streets of Ming and Qing buildings, old government offices, a special effects studio and a gunplay hall.

There are five streets lined with ancient structures, and which recreate street scenes from the Ming and Qing dynasties and the Republican Period. Hundreds of movies have been shot here, including Chen Kaige's *Farewell My Concubine* and Lao She's *Teahouse*. Tourists who get lucky might bump into film celebrities.

One of the film tourism city's most popular sets is the Rongguo and Ningguo mansion, which appeared in *A Dream of Red Mansions* shot in 1987.

The gunplay hall is where visitors can experience a movie-style gunfight. Certain battle scenes are recreated in which participants can act as a gunman traveling over "mountains and valleys" to "rescue the hostage."

The complex also has a special effects studio that presents filmmaking tricks in lighting, music and dubbing. Visitors who want to bring home their audio-visual experience can get a CD of the presentation for 40 yuan.

Where: 77 Beisanhuan Zhong Lu, Haidian District

Getting there: Take bus 16, 22, 123, 331, 361, 367, 410, 422, 626, 718, 801 or 967 to Beitapingqiao Xi stop, then walk to the place

Open: 8:30 am - 5 pm

Tel: 8204 3638

Admission: 60 yuan; 30 yuan for students and senior citizens



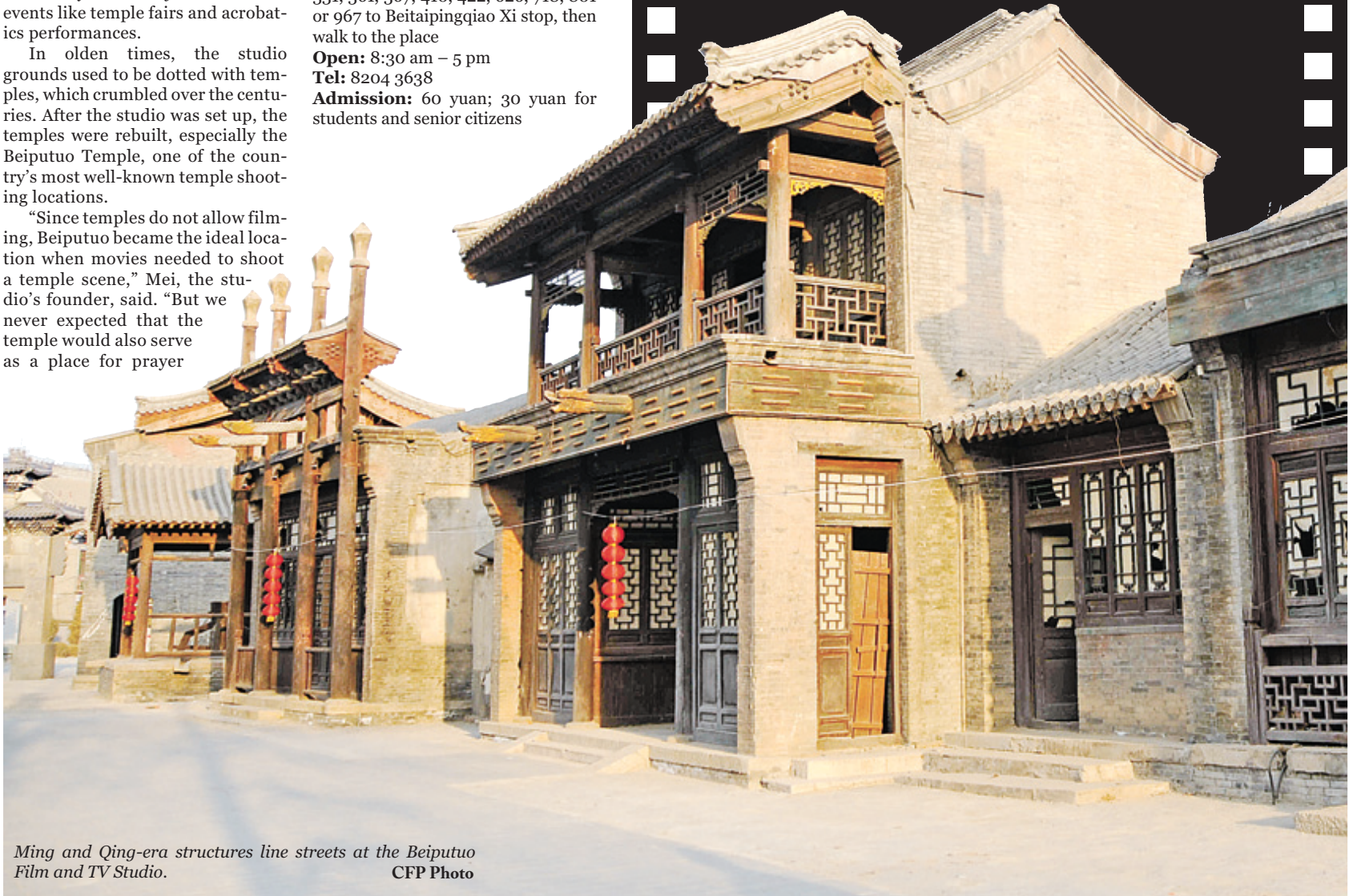
The garden from the novel *A Dream of Red Mansions* at Beiputuo Film and TV Studio
Photo provided by Beiputuo



The Beiputuo Temple, a popular film set, also attracts crowds of worshippers.
CFP Photo



An old teahouse and a rickshaw at the Beijing Film Tourism City
Photo provided by the Beijing Film Tourism City



Ming and Qing-era structures line streets at the Beiputuo Film and TV Studio.
CFP Photo

Who complains?

By Morry Morgan

Before you answer, I have a story to tell.

I live in Shanghai, where the traffic is chaotic: bordering dangerous. There are significantly more cars than parking spaces. So I choose not to drive. I take taxis, something I would call a necessary evil because they too drive dangerously.

If you are in taxis as often as I, then you know exactly what I am talking about. They speed, run red lights, almost mow down pedestri-

“Loyal people complain. Instead of feeling angry the next time you receive a complaint, you should be happy.”

ans and cyclists and take corners at full speed. CNN reported that China has 2 percent of the world's cars, but 15 percent of the world's car related deaths.

One afternoon I took a taxi to the Hongqiao Airport for my flight to Beijing. I looked out the cab's window and realized we missed the highway exit. The driver seemed to realize this too, and in an incredible act of stupidity, slammed on his brakes in the middle of a three-lane highway.

Stunned, I shouted for him to keep driving straight lest we get rear-ended by a truck. He ignored my pleas, and instead shifted into reverse!

However, the point of this story is not to highlight the idiocy of Shanghai's taxi drivers, but how although I have been subjected to countless poor drivers I have never officially complained. Sure, I shouted at the drivers, and driving backwards down a highway brought out some of my more colorful Chinese, but I have never written a letter or called a complaints hotline.

If you've ever lived in Shanghai, or for any big city, then you have probably done the same. You probably thought:

“Nothing will change if I complain.”

“With over 40,000 taxis in Shanghai, I'll never see that driver again.”

“I'm too busy to complain.”

So if a near death experience does not cause complaints, then what does?

Loyalty.

The three examples above all fall under the same trap: you have no loyalty to



CFP Photo

the taxi company. Loyalty makes us complain, and disloyalty makes us take our business elsewhere.

So who complains? Loyal people. Instead of feeling angry the next time you receive a complaint, you should be happy. After all, you just identified a loyal customer who is willing to stick with you, as long as you make improvements.

Without a complaint, you might assume a customer was loyal after, say, three years. But that may not be enough.

One of our customers, Nortel, was with us for three years. But when we changed account managers, we lost all the goodwill he had built up and Nortel dropped us two months later. If three years was not enough to inspire loyalty, then there is no reason to assume five is enough.

It is very, very difficult to determine whether a client is loyal or not, unless you personally know its CEO. But with a complaint, you know instantly, because loyal people complain.

Dining

Beer Garden



The beer garden at Swissotel Beijing is a great place for a relaxing evening of live music and authentic barbecue and Bavarian specialties, from mouthwatering Weisswurst to delectable Sauerkraut with Nuremberg sausage. Sports are broadcasted on its big, 5-square-meter screen.

Where: Swissotel Beijing, 2 Chaoyangmen Bei Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: From May to October, 11:30 am – 12:30 am

Tel: 6553 2288 ext. 2161/1985/1986

Zongzi



Celebrate the Dragon Boat Festival with a variety of delectable

table Zongzi, a glutinous rice dumpling. Choose from traditional delicacies such as lotus seed paste, sweetened red bean paste, assorted meats and Chinese dates, or opt for the Premium Zongzi, sumptuous dumplings oozing with five spices and abalone and dried scallops. Smartly packaged Zongzi gift sets and gift hampers are also available.

Where: Summer Palace, 1 Jianguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: Until May 28

Tel: 6505 2266 ext. 34

Dragon Boat Festival



Immerse yourself in the dragon boat festival and enjoy glutinous rice dumplings and glutinous millet rice dumplings. Exquisite gift boxes are specially prepared.

Where: Hanmeifang Chinese Restaurant, Zhaolong Hotel, 2 Gongti Bei Lu, Chaoyang District
Cost: 78 yuan, 138 yuan (two-layer box)

Tel: 6597 2299 ext. 0215/6210

Tourism

Surge in tourist trips to Rhodes

Tourist arrivals on the southeastern Aegean island of Rhodes increased 30 percent in April over their 2008 numbers. Roughly 42,295 tourists arrived on the island on chartered flights, with the number of French tourists recording a notable increase. The number of tourists from Germany, Britain, Sweden, Finland and Israel was also considerable, contradicting ominous forecasts based on the global economic crisis.

Aviation

Singapore Airlines fights A/H1N1

Singapore Airlines is increasing measures to protect passengers from the A/H1N1 flu virus. The Airline is waiving cancellation and itinerary change fees worldwide as a sign of good-will.

The waiver is valid for tickets issued prior to April 28 for travel up to, and including May 27 on Singapore Airlines flights only. Customers may change the routing of their journeys, defer the date of travel until October 31 or cancel without penalty.

KLM gives name to New Tulip

This year, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines is celebrating its 90th anniversary. As the Keukenhof Gardens is now 60 years old, its managers decided to name a special tulip after it.

These organizations share more than just longevity. Both are renowned Dutch institutions and are active on the world stage. Many KLM passengers visit the Keukenhof every year. With visitors averaging 800,000 every two months, the gardens rank among the Netherlands' top tourist attractions.

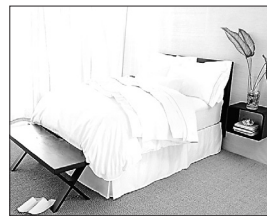
Hotel

Marriott Road Show in Beijing, Tianjin

The cluster hotels in Beijing and Tianjin by Marriott Group held their Road Show at Tianjin Binjiang Renaissance Hotel and Renaissance Tianjin TEDA hotel and convention center. The show provided Marriott Hotel customers in both locations a chance to conduct business.

Representatives from the Marriott Hotels of Beijing and Tianjin will visit Guangzhou, Shenzhen and other cities as the Road Show continues in June.

Heavenly celebration



To celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Heavenly Bed, guests who stay for 10 nights or purchase 10 single night-room vouchers at the package rate of 1,800 yuan per night will receive a complimentary Heavenly Bed. It is a once in a lifetime chance for rejuvenation. The 10-layer Heavenly Bed has a custom-designed pillow-top mattress set; a cozy down blanket; three crisp sheets; a comforter, duvet and five pillows.

Where: Westin Beijing Financial Street, 9B Financial Street, Xicheng District

When: May 1 – December 31
Tel: 6606 8866

(By Sun Feng)

Chinglish story

This column focuses on Chinglish mistakes in our daily life. If you have any experiences to share, send them to Wang Yu at wangyu2008@ynet.com.



CFP Photo

The line between weight loss and fat reduction

By Zhao Hongyi

Last week, I went to Tianjin to conduct an interview at a weight-loss hospital. Little did I know I'd come back also with an interesting story about Chinglish signs.

The hospital, which has become renowned internationally, helps overweight people slim down using Traditional Chinese Medicine approaches like acupuncture, massage and specially prepared food. It has admitted hundreds of patients from all corners of the globe, and most of them have successfully lost tens, if not hundreds, of kilograms.

The moment I reached the hospital gate, I noticed an English sign that said, "Tianjin Aimin Fat Reduction Hospital."

I thought "weight loss" should have been used instead of "fat reduction." The latter is a literal translation of the words *jian*, which means "reduction," and *fei*, which means "fat." I raised this topic with the hospital's president.

"We originally thought of 'weight loss,'" the president said. "But we insisted on 'fat reduction' because we wanted to emphasize that our methods for losing weight were a form of medical treatment, rather than health care."

"Weight loss" describes the process of training aerobically to lose weight and become stronger, while "fat reduction" is a medical phrase that means reducing fatty deposits in specific areas of the body by medical means, such as laser fat reduc-

tion and ultrasound fat reduction.

I received a good English-language and health lesson, so I kept my mouth shut until we reached the hospital yard where patients do their daily exercises. I asked a doctor to introduce me to some of the foreign patients.

We walked up to a group of men exercising on stationary bikes. "Hey, come down from your bicycle!" the doctor told one of them.

A patient from the US, who was nearby, couldn't help correcting my companion's English. "Doctor, you should say 'please get off your bicycle.'"

This made all of us laugh, and established a congenial atmosphere for the rest of my visit.

Blacklist

This is a column of words or phrases commonly mis-used by Chinese speakers. If you're planning to be an English teacher, reporter or employee of a multinational company, then watch out for this page each week.

Local professor: Zhu Shida

1. Weigh loss progress

"Weigh" is a verb that means "to find out how heavy a thing is." For example, "Weigh the pros and cons." How can the word then be combined with "loss" in a phrase? Obviously, the writer wanted to use the noun "weight," which means "how heavy a thing is." The phrase should then be "weight loss progress." Similarly, you can say "progress in trimming the body." Now you see how important it is to know the function of each word; even the smallest slip-up will result in a big mess.

2. There are a growing number of symphonies performed in China.

Can you discern the mistake in this sentence? The problem lies with the attributive clause "performed in China." The sentence should be written either as "There are a growing number of symphonies that perform in China" or "There are a growing number of symphonies performing in China." You either make it an attributive clause or a participial phrase modifying "symphonies." I cite another example for your perusal: "These are men who defy any danger" or "These are men defying any danger."

3. Millions births

This concerns expressing numbers. To communicate the idea within the original phrase, you may say, "several million births" or "millions of births." When you wish to express the huge numbers of some thing, you can say, "She can think of millions of reasons for not helping with the dishes." When "millions" is used as an adjective, it indicates "a very large number of," for instance, "a million thanks."

Native speaker: Penny Turner

1. Weigh loss progress

Yes, the first word was missing one very important letter "t." Like Professor Zhu said, be careful with word choices because even the smallest mistake can have big consequences. After two years of living in China, I have noticed that Chinese people have special difficulty with words whose noun and verb forms are spelled quite similarly, for example, "certificate" and "certify." I think it is because many such words in Chinese function both as a noun and a verb.

2. There are a growing number of symphonies performed in China.

The professor's corrections are right – except for an error in the subject-verb agreement in the suggested sentences. The subject of each sentence is the "growing number" of symphonies, which is a singular subject. Thus, the verb to be paired with it should also be singular – "is." The sentences should be rewritten as "There is a growing number of symphonies that perform in China" and "There is a growing number of symphonies performing in China."

3. Millions births

"Millions of birth" can be used to express the sheer huge number of births in a hospital, town or city within a given period of time. But if the writer wants to indicate specific numbers, then it should be "a million births" or however many births within a given period of time.

Chinglish on the way

This column aims to identify Chinglish in public areas. If you see any Chinglish signs, please send a picture of it to wangyu2008@ynet.com together with your name and address.



Racist Park!?

By Tiffany Tan

A sign like this is the last thing that Beijing wants as it tries to build on its image as an "Olympic city," a cosmopolitan metropolis and center for international arts and culture.

Chinese people are notorious for gawking at foreigners, especially those who look completely unlike them. But Chinese people are also some of the friendliest and most helpful to foreigners that I know – no matter what the color of your skin is.

The highway sign is not a reflection of the Chinese people's nature; merely somebody's lack of proficiency in the English language. How such a big and important sign could have passed quality control amazes me! The Chinese translation helps us navigate this landmine-laden path: It says Exit to the Chinese Ethnic Culture Park (Minzu Yuan) up ahead.

No offense meant. Somebody just needs to study English harder – or find a better translator!

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